



# THE MARIE MANTRA



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT  
POWERHOUSE **MARIE FORLEO**  
WANTS YOU TO ADOPT HER GUIDING  
LIFE PHILOSOPHY: EVERYTHING IS  
FIGUREOUTABLE.

BY JAMIE FRIEDLANDER

# Among 3,789 other things, Marie Forleo loves to cook.

**I** ask her if she cooks Italian food.

“Ahhh, yes, mama,” she says. “I have a 12-hour spaghetti sauce that is ridiculous.”

You could say narrowing down her passions hasn’t been easy.

When Forleo was young, adults would inevitably ask her what she wanted to be when she grew up, and she found herself with a continually expanding answer. She wanted to be a makeup artist, a teacher, a businesswoman, a dancer and an animator for Disney, just to name a few potential careers.

“I think there are so many people like me who didn’t pop out of the womb being like, *I want to be an actress*, or *I want to be a doctor*, or *I want to be a writer*,” she says. “Many of us don’t have that clarity. It’s just not how we’re built.”

This variety of interests persisted into adulthood. Not long after graduating from college at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, Forleo took a job in finance with the New York Stock Exchange. It wasn’t for her. The New Jersey native then tried magazine publishing, but didn’t feel like she fit in there either.

When she discovered life coaching, she knew she’d found her calling. There was just one problem.

It was the early 2000s, and life coaching was still a nascent industry. In order to keep her business afloat, she had to take

on odd jobs—everything from bartending and waiting tables to cleaning toilets. She also had started her ascent in the dance and fitness world, and had begun teaching classes.

“It was just this point in my life where I’d go to a party, I’d meet someone, and they’d be like, ‘Oh, what do you do for a living?’” Forleo, 43, says. “I would feel so ashamed and I’d want to cry because I didn’t really have a good answer.”

All of the business books she was devouring at the time preached the benefits of cultivating a niche. “Intellectually, I understood that it made sense, but for me, at that point in my life, it didn’t match—it didn’t connect,” she says. “It was like I was a round peg trying to fit myself into a square hole. It just wasn’t working.”

And then a lightbulb went off.

“I think it was out of this extraordinary shame and frustration—and continuing to feel like a failure every time someone asked me what I did—that one day, and I don’t know where this came from, it was like a little gift from the career gods, the phrase *multipassionate entrepreneur* just literally surfaced in my mind, and I said it out loud,” she says.

This one phrase changed the course of her professional life. “It gave me this entire new context through which I could talk about all the things I was doing,” she says. “Most of us don’t fit into a clear, neat little box. Society often tries to label us in clear, neat little ways, but we don’t fit in that way. We’re all multit talented and multifaceted.”

And multit talented and multifaceted she is. Her company, New York City-based Marie Forleo International, is a multimillion-dollar business focused on all things personal development. Her most recent book, *Everything is Figureoutable*, which was released in September, is based on a concept she initially piloted in Oprah Winfrey’s *SuperSoul Sessions* in 2016. In fact, Oprah herself called Forleo, “a thought leader for the next generation.”

Forleo also runs B-School, a digital education program that has helped more than 55,000 people from 148 countries in over 600 industries get their small businesses off the ground. She hosts *MarieTV*, a weekly YouTube show with 49 million views and counting in which Forleo interviews people about everything from meditation to failure. Her guests have included people like Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*; speaking phenom Brené Brown; author and activist Dr. Terarai Trent; and best-selling author and activist Kris Carr.

“Marie inspires you to believe in yourself, and your unique gifts, so you can unlock your greatest potential,” says Carr, who has become a close friend of Forleo’s—the two talk almost daily. “Then she backs up that inspiration with the tools and strategies you need to make your dreams happen. She’s a coach, a mentor, an encourager, and a feisty tough-love giver with a huge heart and a burning desire to make magic and meaning everywhere she goes.”





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## THE 10-YEAR TEST

THINKING ABOUT PIVOTING? USE THIS STRATEGY.

**M**ARIE FORLEO IS NO STRANGER TO MAKING BIG CAREER CHANGES.

Following stints in finance and publishing, she became a major player in the dance and fitness world. (Google “Marie Forleo fitness,” and you’ll come across countless instructional videos from the mid-2000s.) At one point in time, Forleo was a Nike Elite Athlete. She traveled the world teaching dance and fitness classes to thousands.

Around the same time, her coaching career began to take off. Forleo was faced with a decision: Should she continue pouring her energy into dance and fitness, or should she focus more on her life coaching and public speaking business? She used a method she calls the 10-Year Test.

“Imagine yourself 10 years older, and ask yourself, *Would I regret either not continuing to do this or doing this?*” Forleo says.

This can apply to either taking on a new endeavor or sticking with an existing one. Picture your current passion. Ten years from now, do you still see yourself deriving the same level of joy—if not more—from it? If so, stick with it.

Or, picture something new that excites you. If you don’t take on this endeavor, will you regret it in 10 years? If so, it’s time to change course.

Forleo used this mental test to determine that although she loved dance and fitness, she couldn’t picture a future in which she used her body as her main vessel for income. It’s still very much a part of her life, but it’s no longer a revenue stream.

“This idea of leaning into your future and trying it on—just like if you’d go into a store and try on a dress or a sweater, and seeing how it felt to you—I think is a really interesting, valuable way for people to decide for themselves when it’s time to let something go,” Forleo says.



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The most formative moment in Forleo’s life was the day her parents got divorced. She was 8 years old, and her recollection of the day is crystal clear.

“My parents, their fights were never about—thankfully—drugs, or alcohol or infidelity,” Forleo says. “It was always around money. Money, money, money, money—specifically there not being enough of it, and my mom not feeling like she had any power or control over it.”

Forleo recalls her mother being on the phone with her grandmother, tears streaming down her face. “I just remember looking at her—she looked really, really skinny,” Forleo says. “Her face looked red, her eyes were bloodshot, and she was crying through the phone.”

Her mother hung up the phone, bent down so her eyes could be on the same level as her daughter’s, and grabbed Forleo’s shoulders.

“Marie, you need to listen to me,” her mother said. “Never, ever, ever let a man control your money. Never let any man control your life. When you grow up, you need to be successful enough to take care of yourself. You need to never let anyone take control over your money or your life. Don’t be stupid like I am right now.”

“I was just, like, shook,” Forleo says. Her 8-year-old mind began churning a little equation of sorts. *The lack of money equals pain, she thought. Not enough money equals the loss of love, and giving away your life power to someone else equals massive regret and stupidity.*

She made a promise to herself in that moment that somehow, she would grow up and find a way to earn enough money to take care of her family.

“I just really wanted money to be this tool for healing,” she says. “I honestly believe it was that experience that fired up a



ON HER WEB  
SERIES MARIETV,  
MARIE FORLEO  
REGULARLY HOSTS  
THOUGHT LEADERS  
AND BUSINESS  
INFLUENCERS, SUCH  
AS DAYMOND JOHN

## “I just really wanted money to be this tool for healing.”

drive in me that propelled me, and continues to propel me to this day, to do my best to not only help people create financial freedom for themselves, but also for others as well, so that wealth can take care of their families and their communities.”

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*Everything is Figureoutable* is based on a very simple theory: We are capable of figuring out anything in life, whether it's finding a home for our sick parents, inventing a new technology, or overcoming a daily challenge like managing our health, money or relationships. To wit: Forleo's parents figured out their differences and eventually reconciled.

Her mother, who is now 71, was a model of resourcefulness for a young Forleo. The figureoutable philosophy, as she calls it, began when she was a young girl developing memories of her mother up on the roof fixing a leak or perched in the bathroom retiling the floor.

“She is about 5-foot-3, she looks like June Cleaver, she curses like a truck driver, and she is one of the most industrious people you will ever meet in your life,” Forleo says.

One of her mother's most prized possessions was a small, AM/FM transistor radio she acquired by collecting enough proofs of purchase from Tropicana orange juice. The radio, Forleo says, looked exactly like a Tropicana orange, complete with a red-and-white striped straw sticking out of the top.

“It was like her friend, her companion,” Forleo says. “I could always find her around the house because she always had this radio with her. And it was always on.”

One day, Forleo came home from school. The sky was beginning to turn dark, and her house was eerily quiet. “Which is very, very unique for an Italian-American household,” she says.



“I hope that collectively, we can use this spirit, this idea, this mantra, this conviction, of everything is figureoutable to create a more just and peaceful and loving world.”

She walked inside to find her mom hunched over the kitchen table. “It was like we were in an operating room,” Forleo says. “On the table is her beautiful little Tropicana orange in like 15 or 20 pieces.” She asked her mom what happened. Her mom said everything was fine—the antenna and dial were a little off, so she had to fix the radio.

“This is the first time I thought to actually ask her, ‘Mom, how do you know how to do so many things that you’ve never done before and that nobody is showing you how to do?’”

Her mom put down her screwdriver, looked her directly in the eyes and told her, “Marie, nothing in life is that complicated. You can do anything you set your mind to if you just roll up your sleeves, get in there and do it. Everything is figureoutable.”

“It was one of those moments where it just entered my consciousness and my soul; it felt like a gong,” Forleo says. “I was like woah. Everything is figureoutable, everything is figureoutable, holy ---, everything is figureoutable. And from that moment on, it became this internal conviction, this mantra where no matter what I aimed myself at, I just had it in me.”

Through tried-and-true personal development concepts like how to eliminate excuses, progress not perfection, and the benefits of starting something before you’re ready, *Everything is Figureoutable* offers nearly 300 pages of motivation that intertwines personal anecdotes, research and stories from members of Forleo’s community.

“Even if this entire book is bull---, can you think of a more pragmatic philosophy to embrace?” Forleo writes in the intro. “Can you imagine a more useful and supportive belief than everything is figureoutable?”

This frank and honest attitude, with a touch of humor, is what has guided Forleo’s career.

## MARIE FORLEO ON THIS ISSUE’S THEME: DETERMINATION

**F**ROM THE MOMENT FORLEO REALIZED a life working on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange wasn’t for her, determination has played an important role in her life.

“To quit without a safety net, to keep trying different things and to keep failing, quite wonderfully, and then to get up and go again—that has been the through line for every aspect of my life,” she says. “From failed relationships and getting out of the ones that didn’t work to saving the ones that really deserved to be saved. To building the company from just me on my laptop to having 30 full-time employees. Determination has been the root of every single thing I’ve achieved, and I expect it to continue that way into the future.”



## S BREAK FREE

### HOW TO GUARD YOUR PRECIOUS TIME IN THE DIGITAL AGE

**N EVERYTHING IS FIGUREOUTABLE**, Forleo spends ample time addressing one of the biggest traps when it comes to managing our time: technology.

Her best advice for combating the grip our laptops and smartphones have on us?

“Create before you consume,” she says. “No matter what it is that you’re working to create in your life, whether it’s writing, a new business idea, or a stronger, healthier body, create that outcome for yourself before you open your phone and consume the work of others, through Instagram, your newsfeed or your email.”

“While we take what we do for the company really seriously, Marie doesn’t take herself too seriously,” says Tana Parrott, vice president of business operations at Marie Forleo International. She and Marie met eight years ago, and have been close ever since. “Bringing the fun to everything she creates, I think, is something that sets her apart. I think people are craving that.”

By being herself, Forleo is able to navigate the skepticism some people might feel about personal development and expand her audience. “I think people should be skeptical,” she says. “Because here’s the truth: In every field—in entertainment, in medicine, in law, in science, in sports—there are folks who are ethical and amazing and talented and wonderful and full of integrity, and then there are folks who are not. And personal development doesn’t get a pass from that.”

Her advice? Get acquainted with several teachers to find one that works for you, much like you would with a yoga instructor, a business coach or anything else. “If someone is interested in growing or solving a particular problem or achieving a particular dream, then they should test out a bunch of different teachers,” she says.

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When we speak, Forleo uses my first name often and jokingly refers to me as “mama” twice. She curses enough to make her relatable, albeit maybe less than her mother. I get the sense that she’s constantly full of energy and enthusiasm and joy,

but also that she’s tough and firm and takes no nonsense. She appears simultaneously gentle and fiery.

“When you have Marie as a friend, you’ve got a champion in your corner,” Carr says. “She shows up for people in a big way. No matter what’s going on in her busy life, she’s always there for you. If I need to brainstorm a business idea, I call Marie. If I’ve got something to celebrate, there’s no one who will shake her pom-poms harder. And if I’ve got hurt in my heart, she’s got an endless supply of love and tissues.”

Like Forleo said, she doesn’t fit into a neat little box of what people expect she should be. She’s known for her stylish outfits on MarieTV, but also loves horror films and zombie flicks.

Her partner, actor Josh Pais (you might recognize him from *Ray Donovan* or *Law & Order*) has been in dozens of movies and TV shows. But he hasn’t been in a horror film—yet. “Hopefully soon,” Forleo says, laughing. “My friends get excited to see scary movies with me because I scream so loud that I scare the entire theater more than the actual movie.”

After joking about why she quit watching *The Walking Dead* (there was too much human-on-human torture), Forleo’s tone turns serious and contemplative.

“When we look around the state of our world today, there are so many challenges that we face: poverty, inequality and injustice on so many levels,” she says. “I am hopeful that there are incredibly talented, brave, capable people that will pick up this book and that will take on this mantra for themselves. I hope that collectively, we can use this spirit, this idea, this conviction, of everything is figureoutable to create a more just and peaceful and loving world.” ♦

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