

# SUNA

Suna Senman, LMSW  
*Life Transformation Facilitator*  
*Author*

*Live Your True Self*

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## Press kit

### Bio

Suna Senman LMSW, CSW, CTIM, CED is a life transformation facilitator who specializes in wellness counseling, childhood development, peace education, and diversity training. She blogs on topic for The Huffington Post; she has published articles on topic in periodicals such as Metro; and she is the author of *Being: A Process*. Through her work, Suna helps people expand their sense of self, release their illusion of separation, develop nurturing partnerships, and consciously design a harmonious life path. Her writing has included interviews with supermodel Tyra Banks, celebrity violinist Miri Ben Ari, and relationship expert Paul Brunson.



# Areas of expertise

- \* Peace education
- \* Life transitions
- \* Personal development
- \* Stress management
- \* Relationship dynamics
- \* Childhood development

## Interview topics

### 1. Peace Begins with You

*From natural disasters to market crashes and from the surly attitude of a store clerk to the drama-queen antics of a friend, there are many forces that affect us while remaining outside our control. Even in cases where we cannot prevent a situation or dynamic from occurring, however, we still can choose how to respond to it. In addition, while we may not be able to entirely control our feelings about a given matter, we can make choices about how to act/not act upon them. Peace begins with an internal decision about who we are and how we want to walk through the world, followed by a commitment to walking our talk – one baby step at a time.*

*Peace is created, and our characters are shaped, by the culmination of our little actions: choosing to walk away from a fight instead of escalate it; choosing to intervene in child abuse, well aware that we will face a personal backlash; or choosing to care for the sick and elderly, despite their being grouchy or otherwise irritating.*



*By getting clear on the delineation between what is in our control and what is outside it; by setting an intention of what we want to put “out there;” and by making conscious choices every day that align our heart’s desire with our behaviors, we each can experience peace and harmony, living life in the eye of the storm.*



## **2. Change happens**

Change happens, whether we are in the driver's seat of or victim to that change. Winter turns into spring; children become adults; and dust falls on clean areas of the house. We tend to think, "If I only make a six-figure income/marry a soul mate/move out of town/have two children...then I will be set." There is, however, no such thing as standing still in life; we are either growing or atrophying. If we want something to continue, we need to "feed" it and help it grow. With regards to our health, for example, we need to eat nutritious food, get adequate rest, and exercise regularly, or else we may end up sick or fatigued. We cannot eternally sit on the couch of life, enjoying our surroundings endlessly, without taking some kind of action.

From our cars to our spouses, we have three questions before us: maintain it, improve it, or replace it?

When we refuse to change ourselves or our circumstances, change will happen without our input. When we recognize that change happens, however, and when we proactively take the reins of that change, we can make the best of our circumstances and move our lives in meaningful and fulfilling directions.

## **3. Follow Your Inner Compass**

From peer pressures to family expectations to advertising campaigns, we face a daily barrage of messages about who we should be, what we should do, and when we should do it. We are in fact surrounded by so much noise that our true identities easily can drown in the cacophony of sound around us. By noticing weaknesses that draw our attention, we get clues about who we are and where we want to grow. We may bemoan being a lousy cook or feeling shy at parties, for example, but never think about our inability to solve calculus problems or shoot a basketball straight into a hoop. Because they grab our attention, cooking skills and social grace are most likely important to us on a deep level, meaning that our souls will flourish if we invest our time and resources into improving our performance in both. Another way of tuning into our inner compass is by spending quiet time alone – meditating, walking through nature, or playing with some form of art. Alone with our thoughts and feelings, we can "dial in" to the sound of our own voice – hearing it, listening to it, turning up its volume over time, and ultimately, making the commitment to follow it, despite external pressures. Following our inner compass challenges us to take responsibility for our lives, make some difficult choices, and face the music of our inevitable clash with other people's expectations. It also puts us in the driver's seat of our lives – empowering us to live authentically and celebrate the beauty of who we truly are.

### **4. Mind Your Body**

Quantum physics teaches that the world is all energy. Some energy is slow, turning into matter that we can see and touch, while other energy is fast and invisible to us – such as microwaves, cell phone waves, and sun rays. Sometimes we can witness the effect of energy, without seeing the energy itself.

A regular meditation practice, for example, can manifest in someone glowing and looking peaceful or approaching life's challenges with an air of confidence and ease. Western society traditionally has claimed there is a split between the mind and body, but contemporary research indicates that there is in fact a strong connection. If we simply think we are taking a drug, for example, our body may respond identically to that of someone who is in fact taking it.

For decades, conventional medicine has poured millions of dollars into controlling this well-known “placebo effect.” Rather than straight-jacketing this powerful connection, as pharmaceutical corporations have done, we can channel it. By meditating regularly, choosing positive thoughts, and speaking about our bodies in loving ways, we can use our minds to affect and improve our health and wellness on every level.

### **5. Live Authentically**

Is the glass half-full or half-empty? Actually it is both. Living authentically means patting ourselves on the back for who we are and what we have accomplished (the glass half-full) while recognizing who we want to be and where we still need to grow (the glass half-empty). It is finding balance between celebration and yearning, so that we become like a tree with roots stretching down into the ground and branches reaching up toward the sky. Real-life situations will show us who we truly are and help us see the path to becoming who we want to be.

We may, for example, believe that we are open-minded and compassionate, then find ourselves making racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks that are hurtful to others. We may think we are courageous, then find ourselves running away from difficult situations instead of staying present with them. In these moments, we come face-to-face with the gap between our perceptions about and the reality of who we are.

By celebrating our strengths, having compassion for our weaknesses, committing to our values, and holding ourselves accountable for our actions, we can live authentically in each moment – always growing, always changing, always improving.



### **6. Raise a Joyful, Healthy Child**

Children and adults share some core needs, though these needs must be met differently — in ways that are developmentally appropriate for each age group. We all need appreciation and approval, for example, but telling an infant that her hair looks fabulous will not quite hit the spot the way it will if we tell a 40-year-old gal pal. Similarly, whereas adults may seek verbal guidance or explanation when doing something new, a toddler will seek physical demonstration. Raising a joyful, healthy child is connected to understanding our own needs and translating them into developmentally appropriate behavior for our children. Teenagers are the trickiest in this regard, as they are caught between the mental and emotional capacity of children and adults. Regardless, there are five basic principles to keep in mind, no matter what the age of the child:

- 1) Listen and ask questions that clarify what your child is saying, instead of assuming you understand immediately.
- 2) If you anticipate your child will make a mistake, but you do not anticipate major consequences, let your child make that mistake and learn from it.
- 3) Apologize where appropriate.
- 4) Get to know your own inner child, and recognize when you are projecting your childhood story onto a situation.
- 5) Have a circle of healthy parenting partners – a spouse, counselor, friends, and family members you trust – involved in your child's life.





### **7. Safely Remove Your Mask**

When we do not feel safe, we do not open up. If we know a judgmental person, for example, we will not share certain information with that individual. Similarly, if we are critical of ourselves, we may hide from our conscious mind some of the deep truths about who we are. We may, for example, believe that we love our career choice and that we prioritize our work. If we actually calculate our actions during our waking hours, however, we may find that we spend a major part of our time exercising outdoors, taking care of friends and family, cooking, or listening to music. These behaviors may serve as an indicator of what we truly love and value in life.

Perhaps we would be happier and more fulfilled as a personal trainer, senior caregiver, chef, or vocal artist. If we are judgmental of our heart's desire, however, we may block these options from our consideration and refuse to even recognize our longing, or true calling. In addition, we may walk around with unresolved traumas that manifest in behaviors like binge eating, excessive drinking, or chain smoking.

We may not even realize that we have a core issue or addictive habit until we "hit bottom" and come face-to-face with consequences like losing a job, spouse, or home. We do not, however, need to wait until circumstances force us to face who we truly are. Instead, we can proactively create the conditions that encourage us to open up, "get real," and celebrate our authentic selves: We can find a professional counselor with whom we feel safe, and in that relationship, explore our yearnings and resolve our traumas; we can shift our energy, and therefore our way of walking through the world, through meditation, neuro-linguistics, and acupuncture; and we can surround ourselves with people who can recognize and validate our true beings – such as in 12-step programs and other spiritually-oriented recovery groups.





### **8. Turn Obstacles into Opportunities**

Our biggest obstacle is our own limited thinking. When we challenge ourselves to reevaluate and reframe that which seems like a road block, instead of railing against it, we may discover that it is in fact a path to a deeper, more meaningful life experience. Sometimes we may not see the gift or usefulness of an “obstacle,” until many years later. By taking a leap of faith and trusting the Universe, however; by flowing with the river of life instead of fighting the current upstream, we may discover, learn from, and celebrate what is, instead of spinning in frustration over what is not. In addition, by recognizing the essence of our heart’s desire, without putting labels and preconditions on it, we may in fact receive exactly which we are seeking. If we seek a soul mate, for example, and we begin looking into people’s hearts, instead of at their faces, body shapes, or dress styles, we may finally find our ideal match. There are three basic steps to recognizing an opportunity within a perceived obstacle: 1) Affirm that there is an opportunity inside; 2) observe, listen, and meditate, to raise awareness of that opportunity; and 3) be open to flowing with the opportunity, once it is clear.



# Sample questions

1. *How can we find peace in times of crisis?*
2. *How do we find our footing during times of change?*
3. *Why do we keep doing the habits that we want to break?*
4. *How can extremely diverse cultures live together harmoniously?*
5. *What does it mean to be a life transition facilitator?*
6. *What are some healthy ways to cope with intense emotions like anger?*
7. *How do we know if we are living authentically?*
8. *How can we safely remove the mask we've been wearing for a lifetime?*
9. *As our children grow, how do we transition effectively to our new parenting roles?*
10. *How are thoughts, emotions, and physical needs connected?*
11. *How can we turn obstacles into opportunities for growth and change?*
12. *How do our weaknesses shape our lives in powerful ways?*
13. *How do we build a support network?*
14. *How do partnerships create fulfillment in life?*
15. *How do we create balance in relationship?*
16. *How do we manage relationships where the other person does not want to change?*
17. *Why do you focus on moving meditation?*

