



JAN DESAI'S  
**COMPASS ROSE**

A Roadmap to an Authentic Life

Get Your Bearings and Stay on Course to the Life of Your Dreams



IN THIS  
ISSUE

- Time passes quickly
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## At the Turn of the Tide

A bougainvillea growing out of a boulder and a lightning-cleaved oak deliver a powerful message of rebirth in this week's Compass Rose.

*"Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will."*

~Mahatma Gandhi

*All days eventually come to an end. The light fades, and briefly, everything is colored in the rose and gold of twilight. Then night draws its cloak and all light is extinguished. Yet, darkness is nothing more than the opposite of light. In the great wheel of the universe, night is only the precursor of an always-recurrent dawn.*

Soft, early-morning light pierced the darkness and spread over the windowsills in our bedroom. The bluish purple light is timeless and gentle as if sweetly whispering, "Let's do this thing called life once again today." I swear I feel the light more than I see it. I open my eyes just a slit, turn my head, and I know it's time to start my week.



Ahhh... It's Monday morning once again. And then *in a blink of an eye*, it's already Friday. Days dissolve into weeks, and weeks into months with bullet-like speed. Now in my sixth decade, time evaporates more quickly than ever before, like the boiling water escaping from my furiously whistling tea kettle.

I look at my four babies who are **transforming before my eyes into youngsters**. That precious first turn in the crib has morphed into an Olympic long jump down a flight of stairs. They are growing like weeds. And as much as I celebrate their maturation, as a mother, *I mourn my final walk through babyhood*. I am living Harry Bellefonte's timeless song:

*"Where are you going, my little one, little one,  
Where are you going, my baby, my own?  
Turn around and you're two,  
Turn around and you're four,  
Turn around and you're a young girl going  
out of my door."*

At night as my husband and I tuck our two sets of twins into bed and kiss them goodnight, I clutch my heart with wonder (*and a small bit of sorrow*) at the speed with which the arrow of time is piercing my reality. Yet, I **take heart** knowing that time has a cyclical nature as well.

With each change of the seasons, I am reminded that I am in a constant state of evolution and circular renewal. It's an open invitation from the Universal Presence to *find*

*the courage to do things differently.* The world invites me to plant the seeds of change, so that in time I am able to harvest a life that is truly and authentically mine - **the one I always dreamed of, the one I deserve.** And if I miss an opportunity today, or fall flat on my face having screwed things up royally, tomorrow delivers an open invitation to do it all again. With more *grace*, with greater *self-love*, and with the *experience* that comes from making the attempt.

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And so this past week, with the start of another season, I was in my yard changing out the garden beds. The summer heat and humidity of tropical southwest Florida is intense so I love to get my new blooming plants in the ground, fertilized, and established before our *torrential seasonal rains* begin in earnest.

Gardening is one of my great passions. Being outdoors on my knees in front of the planters is like *being in an outdoor church or temple.* I am directly connected to nature and by default into the energy that creates

everything. I rest in the mesmerizing stillness and *surrender any unresolved challenges or pain to the light.*



As if coloring with living plants, I gently rest the multitude of flowers and greenery on top of the soil and carefully create my **floral masterpiece.** And then as I plunge my hands into the deep rich loam, I am instantly transported back almost 14 planting seasons ago to a **very different** time in my life. A time that I now look back on with bittersweet protectiveness, as if watching an unsteady toddler reaching out to explore a new - yet sometimes very frightening - world. It was a time of *great pain and heartbreak*, as well as *great wonder and discovery.*

My life had seemingly fallen apart as I found myself single after more than 20 years of marriage. I was absolutely devastated. I couldn't function. I stopped showering for a week at a time. My hair was twisted into a

greasy, messy pony at the top of my head. I lived and slept in a raggedy pair of cutoffs and the same filthy t-shirt. *I spent all of my waking hours in my garden, tearing out the landscaping, attempting to rearrange every tree, bush, flower, and blade of grass into something that was a version of the perfection that I felt I had lost.*

I scared people back then. I looked crazy and feral. My nails were filthy. My eyes were sunken from lack of sleep. I had lost so much weight my clothes hung on me. I cried at the drop of a hat and couched everything that I saw, everything that I heard, or everything I interpreted within a story of my victimhood.



Everything was being done...to me! I believed I had been unfairly targeted for the worst that life could deliver... by my then husband, by my friends who were afraid to come around for fear of "catching divorce", by life, and by universal powers that be. I wasn't ready to

take responsibility for the role I played in the disintegration of my marriage or for the dysfunctional life I was living. My soon-to-be-ex was *too easy* a target. And so I suffered greatly, bolstering at every opportunity the story of "poor Jan" that I wore like a carapace.

*Gardening was my therapy and my savior.* I remember driving to every garden center and plant store searching for what I **believed** was plant material, but in **reality**, was what I hoped would be a sign from God or a universal life-line that could *convince me that I was going to make it.*

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In reality, I was searching for a sign from God or a universal life-line that could convince me that I was going to make it.

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I will never forget walking into a generations-old garden supply center on the outskirts of town and spending hours walking through the back acres of trees and large plant material looking for that sign.

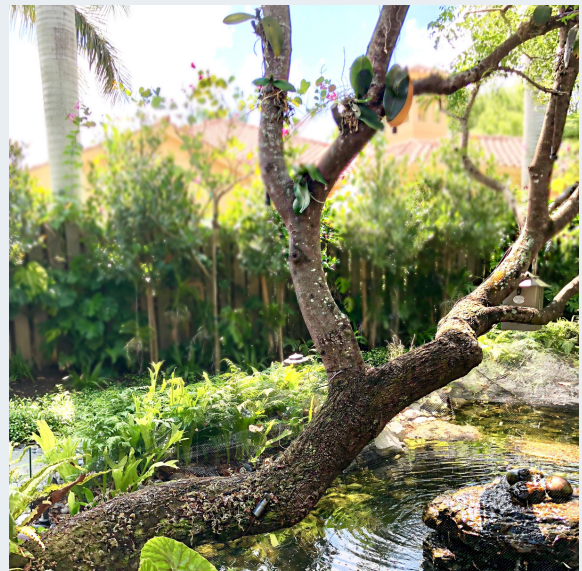
As I walked, I turned a corner and, as always,

*life did what life always does* - if we are awake enough to see the miracles and the messages. There in the full sun stood an eight foot bougainvillea -an immensely showy ornamental tree with intensely colored purple leaves around their tiny white flowers. What made it so unusual was that this bougainvillea was **growing out of a five foot boulder**. It was not in the *ground* and pushing *through* the boulder. This plant had taken root **inside the boulder and flourished**. From the thick bonsai quality of the trunk and branches I could tell that it was an old tree. Yet, despite its obvious age, I was captivated that something that beautiful could not just survive - but **thrive** - in such *rocky, infertile, and hostile conditions*.



The very same bougainvillea that saved me.

With my mind filled with the *miracle of that old bougainvillea*, I continued walking. In the next area I came to, the powers that be sent me the second sign that I had been seeking. Snaking out of a 25 gallon black container was a fragment of an oak tree that was growing parallel to the ground. It had been **struck by lightning** and this *damaged and fragmented piece* is what remained of the original tree. The twisted trunk was more than twelve inches around and it slowly and gracefully curved upward almost eight feet. The **character** of this tree was **indomitable**, yet another *tangible message* of the tenacious ability of nature to *withstand the worst*. Once again, my breath was taken away as I surveyed the absolute beauty and grace of this plant that had stood at ground zero of a lightning strike and still survived. In its brokenness, it carried such character and beauty.



The lightning-cleaved oak..

Both of these trees became the *anchor points* for the *garden of possibility* that I created in my backyard. They were tangible symbols, proof that the tide was turning. They were **God's hand at work** in my life. I had lived in the dark for so long, that reality itself had answered my call to find the light. And so I was thrust into my own awakening.

That very next day I knew that in order to move forward, I first needed to put myself in an extended time-out. I realized that my carapace of victimhood no longer fit, and so I hit the brakes in my life and shut everything down. I began saying **no** to every invitation. I **resigned** from my community boards. I **cut off** every distraction I could identify and for the first time ever, I got quiet.

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## For the first time ever, I got quiet.

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Without realizing it, in cutting myself off from the greater *distractions* of life, I began to get *in touch with the silence of my soul*.

For 18 months I worked relentlessly on **myself**. I listened to the stirrings of something deep within. As I did, the synchronicity and magic that unfolded around me were astounding. I was physically moved into direct alignment with *individuals who played a profound role in my recovery*. I witnessed unexpected messages and profound insights that *kept me moving in the flow of my own becoming*.

When tragedy strikes, we can never see the big picture. As humans, we are future blind. However, despite this blindness, we must always believe that we are being moved into more. In retrospect, 14 years ago was the perfect time for my life to fall apart. It was my divinely-appointed moment of rebirth. The conditions were perfect to nurture the qualities I needed to step into the life I was born to lead.



No experience in life is ever wasted. By finding that still point in my soul, I came to realize that all of my prior experiences merely served as the fodder necessary for me to grow and accept the love that lives at my core. And here is what was revealed to me:

None of us are ever irrevocably broken. We all are evolving. Within each of us resides the

courage to break the rules necessary create our most authentic and beautiful life and to claim our individual and unique destiny. We possess the power of that bougainvillea pushing out of the density of rock, invincible, thriving, abundant, and beautiful. We contain the unassailable heart of that oak. We have been struck by the fire of uncontrollable events, cleaved by life's unpredictability, yet we remain indomitably strong, passionate, worthy, radiant, and courageous. We survive, and we always reach upward toward the light and our most authentic selves.

My experiences in life are a living testament to all women, regardless of how overwhelming the burden, how challenging your circumstances and how daunting the crisis, dawn will break, night will fade away and as the future becomes the present, I promise you this - **the best is yet to come.**

Until next week,



# Announcements and Inspiration!

Brand New Feature Coming on Monday!



Each Monday morning, direct to your inbox, you'll receive *Jan's Monday Mindful Minute*...a brief, one-minute-long video designed to get your week started off on the right foot! Watch this short video each Monday morning and let Jan's message guide you into living your most authentic life - a life full of meaning, joy, and courage!

We're excited to bring this new feature to you, so let us know what you think of it!



Connect to the  
silence of  
your soul.  
It will never  
steer you  
wrong.

Share the Compass Rose with Friends and Family!