

# How to Feel Confident with Your Special Talents

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Black  
Lawrence  
Press

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# How to Do the Cha Cha

Stay alert in red rolling light. Focus premium-like in 4/4 time. Go into debt with arms held in minor Jezebel pose. Small sidestep about the star specks on the floor. Chin up during the landslide. Sexy bend, sexy bend!  
Practice—

Perfect understanding of where your partner is coming from. Your partner is coming from the same revolutionary party you came from. Don't go about this the wrong way again. Or the next gala will find you cowering under a punch bowl, strained cheek rouged up in-

Panic-rose.

Boys and girls in panic rows. Roadkill of the Rodeo, toeing the party line on one side of the fault line, quaking. Which side are you on, lead or follow-fallow?

Push; no, pull. Adjust your slippery straps and swaddle sandals in bandages: it's open season on open-toed slip-ons. Lesson: don't leave *cha* to chance. Change into a tux and bind yourself into a seamless Mister. Move her, Master Manipulator.

Sway the small of her back with your small, gloved hand.

# How to Cheat at Poker

Paint your toenails in the shade of mirror. Wear open-ended shoes. Glint with the best of them. Move to Kansas City. Pop out of a cake. Wearing thirteen flavors of frosting. Your hair teased all heiress-like.

Vouch for the jacks. When you know someone who knows someone with chips. Substitute an accent; exaggerate a cough. Get high and mighty up in the prescription medicine aisle. Stay in your long sleeves and multiple pockets. Fold prettily. An origami made into luck.

Wear photos of strange children in a locket that dangles off-angle. Lean into stranger danger. Take wrong ones to bed. Mornings, demand a pastry case wheeled into your room by a bevy of showgirls. Hide kings and aces in plumes and pasties. Burn anything evidence. Bury the key.

Leave no luck to chance. Change cities and dogs. Tiptoe down stairways and listen, rouged rogue. Get caught up with red hands. Learn faint-sway. Learn slipknot and slideknot. Learn a different lesson from the one they try and teach you. Make bank.

# How to Take Action when You Lose Sight of Your Child at an Amusement Park

Ferret out the Ferris wheel, sherbet orange and pickle green. Fall into line, lockstepping. Cutting in line breeds violence. Kid has other father's eyes, other father's ginger tangles. He lives here now, a homespun school.

Ride that sugar high before you hightail it to the Sit 'n Spin. Vibrating pocket, ICE on the line. Kid wandered off, Kid wants what we all want. You're a shelter of feral cats clawing bars on a rickety roller. Stuffed banana or deep-friend dough?

It's always twilight in the Tunnel of Love. Glide your boat through a flotilla of kissers. Water seeps into your high top sneaks. If he was yours, you'd know.

Mister, have you seen my baby? It has a Tilt-a-Whirl curl atop its head. And a troublesome snaggle of a smile. What kind of child runs towards a bearded lady's corpse? And if it's just an optical illusion, why not say so outright?

What we mean is, this place was better when it was 18 and up.

Now, though, everyone is getting more and more carnie. After hours of superhero-themed joyrides, the insides get scrambled to the point. You don't have to think about things like feelings anymore. Paint a planet on your cheek. Turn the other cheek! Paint a different planet, one with a lot of rings.

# How to Climb a Ladder Safely

Here we are at skybottom, wearing house slippers outside the house because it is already so summer that we can get away with anything.

Here we are at a palm tree, staring up at one black and six-toed cat, waiting for the fire department to show up and coax because this is what always happened on Saturday morning TV.

Here we are taking the long way around the ladder because avoidance actually cures superstition.

Here we are, three rungs up, flashing back to Florida.

Here we are, changing places. I'm up top and you're below. When we get to the middle, one of us dangles.

Undress me on a ladder and my legs look longer.

Rats are clever ladder-makers. They climb vines, sills, and pipes to reach rooftops and shimmy through shingles.

Here we are, peering out at the wreckage. Mourning those we knew and those we didn't.

Here I am and here you are, "we" dissolving on the slow climb down.  
Violet twilight, bruising light.

You saw off the top rung.

Here we are, tossing coins to make decisions.

## How to Dress for a Ouija Board Session

Try to go with a dress that is very fancy and old-fashioned. Think whorehouse madam with a side of zombie. Maiden aunt touched up or down in the style of Edward Gorey. If you don't have a fancy dress, go with a bathrobe.

Put on some gloves and a scarf. Or lots of jewelry. Or tattoo a Celtic cross between your white heavings.

Wear a belt if it would look good with your dress. Tip: A belt will probably not look good with a bathrobe. Even if its buckle is made of a dead elephant's trunk.

Put on a dramatic amount of make-up. Pile your hair on top of your head. Paint your nails black; paint the living room purple. Didn't you leave your cup by the sink?

Hum a song from childhood. Notice that nothing seems to be where you left it. The curtains sway, although there is no breeze. Lost socks reappear in the dryer. Lipstick smooches the mirror: Crème Peach.

What's more surprising: fake real or real fake? Put down the board. You won't be needing that now. You're alone with three vowels and a henna tattoo. Consonants skitter into corners, unused.

# How to Calculate the Value of Scrap Gold

Gold prices tend to rise along with worries of war or inflation. Your gold is hiding in so many places: In mafia teeth. In heart-shape. In time, in pocket, in watch form. In shoe bomb and car bomb. In cross. In pavement. In California hills. In princess bed. In fort. In world's most expensive dessert. In pseudo-Egyptian.

The best way to weigh a melted antique locket is to weigh yourself first, then swallow the gold. Weigh yourself again. Feel the gold nugget nudging girlparts.

A golden bullet will neither kill nor injure a werewolf. The only things that will survive the nuclear holocaust are werewolves, cockroaches, and the gold standard. And maybe you, if you finance right.

Dig deep enough inside. You own the money shot, the gold erection. When adding or subtracting, remember to always carry the one. Most scrap gold dealers keep the calculation a secret.