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## America's Got Talent: How to Discover & Develop Yours

As always, I'm posting my most recent Psychology Today blog to my "regular" blog so that all of you get a chance to read it. Today's post was inspired by another night glued to the sofa and screen with Armando, watching America's Got Talent. Some of the acts were truly laughable (and laugh we did), but watching last night's contestants, I observed five key truths that can help you discover and develop your own unique talent(s) - no matter how old you are, no matter how silly you think your dreams are, and no matter how convinced you are that it's "too late".

In the last few months I've found myself riveted by talent shows like American Idol and America's Got Talent. And like the rest of the world, I found myself thrilled and overcome to tears by Susan Boyle's incredible performance and story on Britain's Got Talent.

As a big part of my mission in life is helping as many people as humanly possible to connect with and finally pursue deeply buried talents and dreams, I find these shows professionally as well as personally fascinating. I'm evangelical about the subject because I myself didn't experience true fulfillment in life until I re-awakened my childhood fascination with dance in my late 20's - that led to a totally new career as a flamenco-dancing wellness expert/author/speaker.

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### 1) ENTHUSIASM: more important than extreme talent

Though I've had the surprising privilege of performing for and even teaching high-profile clients and celebrities, I always point out that I'm not even close to being a "great" dancer. I'm not even the best flamenco dancer in my hometown. Yet I've been told that the reason I've gotten the opportunities that I have is because of the passion and love for the art that comes out of me when I perform.

Ishaara, last night's Bollywood group, is a perfect example of that. They don't appear to be professional dancers, though perhaps some of them have taken classes. Almost anyone with coordination could learn the simple but very effective dance routine they put together. What brought the house down, and the crowd to their feet, was the energy and passion that poured from them as they danced. They love what they do, so much, that they make you love what they do, too. Put love and passion into your talents, however they may be expressed, and you will be amazed by how far it will take you.

Watch Ishaara dance

### 2) YOUR TIME IS NOW: It's never too late

I collect stories of people who finally developed and expressed a talent late in life, and enjoyed much success and joy despite their unconventional timing (I'm one of those stories). One AGT "never too late" hero is 43 year old Kari Callin, who has been singing since she was 3 years old and has dreamed of being a professional singer her entire life. Her obstacle? Callin was born with birth defects, a cleft lip and palate, and has surgical scars and facial features that mark her as different from more typically glamorous singing superstars. She told the audience how once, she'd gathered the courage to audition for a cruise ship job, and they didn't even give her the chance to sing. To quote AGT judge Sharon Osbourne: "Forget the cruise ship, they'll never be able to afford you now!"

Watch Kari Callin bring the house down

3) EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED - and enjoy it!

I've observed that life creates the most fortuitous circumstances for us and our god-given talents, often right under our noses. I never imagined that meeting my Mexican husband would cause me to move to Mexico, and that there I would finally live out my dancing dreams. On America's Got Talent, two randomly matched, introverted college roommates spent months living together without even really talking to each other. When they finally did, they found they both shared a passion for music and dance. They look like two average guys, but watch what happened when these two finally connected and collaborated. It's just spectacular!

Watch Anthony & Matt

4) PERSIST: It will pay off.

When I heard that 16 year old contestant Mia Bostrum had come back again after failing to win the show last year, I prepared myself to be bored by the "comeback", and the judges were equally skeptical. In the end, Mia proved that she really had dedicated herself to phenomenal improvement over the year that had passed. She was so good that it made me ask myself: when I look back over the last year, have I worked as hard as I could to develop my talents? What about you? For me, the answer is a clear no.

Mia's performance

5) DON'T LET THE BUZZER BLOCK YOU.

My pet peeve on America's Got Talent is those annoying buzzers that trigger a giant red X. I agree that some acts are

difficult to endure in their entirety, but just because a person gets a buzzer, or the crowd yells them off the stage (awful!), doesn't mean they should give up on their dreams or talent. A lacklustre singer might just need some guidance and vocal training. A scarily-dressed entertainer might just need an image consultant. A "bad" dancer might just need to take some classes or practice a bit more. I take great joy in proving people wrong - people who have criticized me, or insulted me, or who have gleefully predicted that I would fail. If you dream of doing something special, even if you're not obviously talented at it, I still maintain that there is a reason you have that dream, and the only way that you will experience the wonderful experiences that await you along that path is to walk it. Ignore anyone who tries to "buzz" you by telling you you can't.

What's the next step for you, to explore and develop your unique talent? Take it - right now!

#### About Dr. Biali

Audiences and clients have described Dr. Susan Biali, an award-winning medical doctor, media wellness expert, author, speaker, life coach and flamenco dancer, as "passionate", "real", and "powerful". Formerly a sick, depressed Emergency Medicine resident, Dr. Biali took back her own life and health by learning how to balance her life, listen to her body, and create a life truly worth living. For the past four years, Dr. Biali commuted between her professional life in Canada and her passionate life in Los Cabos, Mexico, where she performed as a professional flamenco dancer for celebrities and exclusive audiences. She and her Latin husband, Armando, even taught Pink how to salsa dance! Today, Dr. Biali teaches others how to discover themselves, create vibrant health, and design the life of their dreams. Frequently featured in media across North America, Dr. Biali is a blogger for Psychology Today, is the weekly wellness expert for the national television program The Daily, and is currently developing her own television show with a team of producers. She has appeared on MSNBC, The Good Life Network, and in Self, Fitness and Hello! magazines, and was even invited to perform flamenco dance on E! Entertainment Television. Her new book, Your Prescription for Life, will be released by New York's Beaufort Books in January 2010. [www.susanbiali.com](http://www.susanbiali.com)