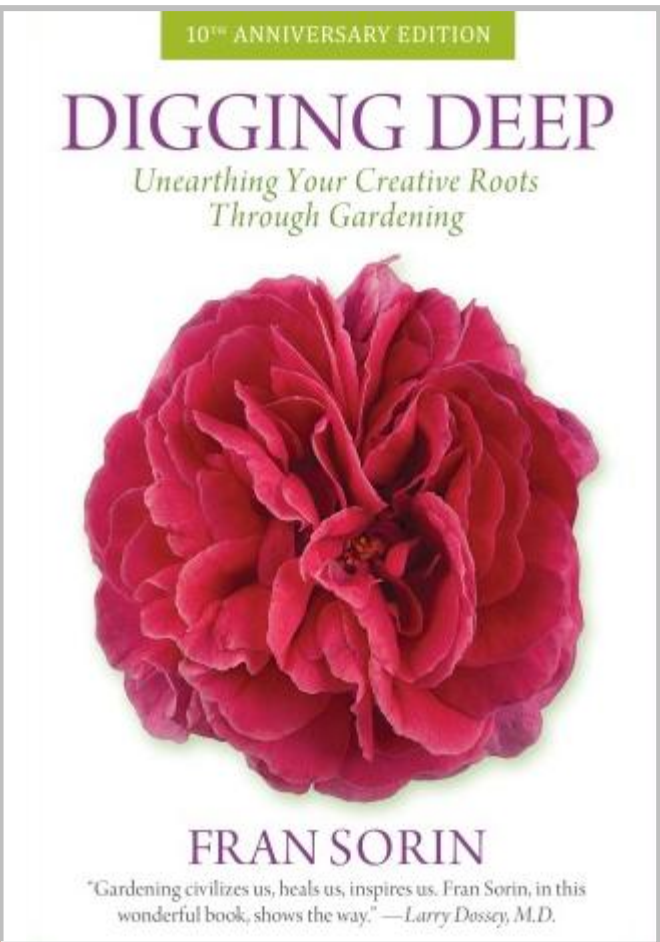


# FRAN SORIN



# MEDIA KIT

# FRAN SORIN

Author of *Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening* – updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**. Fran Sorin is an author, gardening and creativity expert, and deep ecologist. She also has extensive media experience—as a media trainer, broadcaster, journalist, inspirational speaker, and celebrity spokesperson.

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*“Digging Deep teaches the art of living creatively—from envisioning and creating the garden of your dreams to cultivating and embodying more imagination, passion, and play in your daily life. A profound and inspiring book.”*



**Andrew Weil, MD**, author of *Spontaneous Healing*

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***DIGGING DEEP: Book Info***

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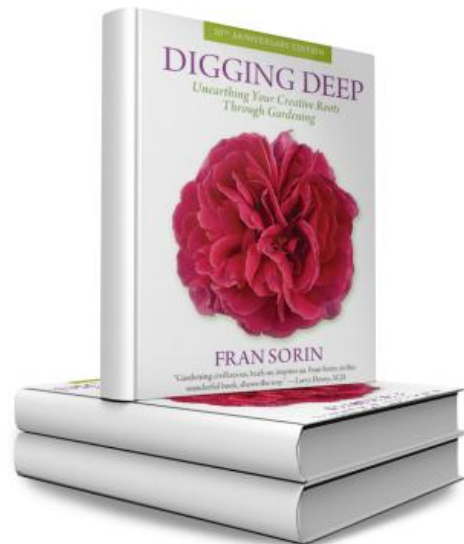
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**2 Line Book Synopsis for *Digging Deep*** – If you’re yearning to get out of the rut you’re in and cultivate more creativity, connection, abundance, and joy in life, the updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** of *Digging Deep*—which uses gardening as a tool for creative awakening— offers the encouragement and tools to make it happen.

**Short Book Synopsis for *Digging Deep*** – If you’re yearning to get out of the rut you’re in and cultivate more creativity, connection, abundance, and joy in life, the updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** of *Digging Deep* offers the encouragement and tools to make it happen. Overflowing with tips, exercises, and resources, this instructive and inspirational guide –which uses gardening as a tool for creative awakening— is even more vital in today’s technology obsessed culture than when first published.

**Medium Book Synopsis for *Digging Deep*** – If you’re yearning to get out of the rut you’re in and cultivate more meaning, connection, and abundance in life, the updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** of *Digging Deep* offers the encouragement and tools to make it happen. Overflowing with tips, exercises, and resources, this instructive and inspirational guide is even more vital in today’s technology obsessed and increasingly nature deprived culture than when first published 10 years ago. From Fran, you’ll learn how to bloom right along with your garden and use gardening as a conduit for experiencing creativity as a rich and dynamic lifelong journey. *The 7 Stages of Creative Awakening* will take you through the steps of removing self-doubt and replacing it with strategies that will help you trust your instincts, let your imagination run wild,

take risks, envision and design the garden of your dreams, reclaim your playfulness, and live the life you're meant to—one filled with joy, well-being, health, and creativity.

### Long Synopsis for *Digging Deep*

If you're yearning to get out of the rut you're in and cultivate more meaning and connection in life, the updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** of *Digging Deep* offers the encouragement and tools to make it happen. Overflowing with tips, exercises, and resources, Fran's *7 Stages of Creative Awakening* will take you through the steps of removing self-doubt and replacing it with strategies that will help you trust your instincts, let your imagination run wild, take risks, envision and design the garden of your dreams, reclaim your playfulness, and live the life you're meant to—one filled with joy, well-being, health, and creativity.

Focusing on gardening as a vehicle for creativity, transformation, health, and well-being, *Digging Deep* counteracts the disconnection and health crisis—both physically and emotionally—fostered by our technology-obsessed culture.

Our country is in a national health crisis with substantial economic and social implications. The U.S. public spends more than 90% of their time indoors, leading an extremely sedentary, disconnected, unhealthy, and unnatural lifestyle. The latest statistics show that 33% of U.S. adults are obese, incurring \$148 billion in medical costs annually and contributing to 18% of U.S. adult deaths. Publicly available data shows U.S. healthcare costs are the highest per capita in the world—and that amount continues to increase.

Recent research funded by Disney shows that **65% of U.S. parents see it as a “very serious” problem that kids are not spending more time outdoors.** According to the survey, this is equal to or a close second to their concerns about bullying, the quality of education, and obesity. **Preschoolers spend about 12 hours a week outside, by the age of 16, our children are spending less than 7 hours a week in nature.**

*Digging Deep* helps counteract nature deprivation through encouraging daily *Nature Walks* and hands-on exercises where readers practice mindfulness and experiencing simply being in nature. By doing so, all of their senses are reawakened and start to feel more alive, exuberant, and connected. This book doesn't overwhelm readers with the whys and hows of the awakening process—or of gardening technique—but rather invites them to jump right in and experience it for themselves.

People are hungry to feed their souls—not only in churches or temples, but in the everyday rhythms and actions of their lives. Day by day we're becoming more acutely aware of our deep-seated need to reconnect with something real in the midst of this disconnected world. The more vested we become in technology, the more we yearn to return to a simpler, more authentic and natural way of life. And what better way to connect with our own naturalness than through tending the land with one's own bare hands?

Everybody wants to be more creative, but often we're afraid to express ourselves, fearful that we'll be criticized. *Digging Deep* remedies this by gently guiding readers through a creative



and spiritual awakening that instills feelings of self-confidence. Technology is an easy distraction from our roots. Studies show that it's basically ruining our brains and our ability to function creatively. If people really want to be more creative, they need to step away from the computer and go outside.

While there are many wonderful gardening books on the market, not a single one comes close to *Digging Deep* in message or purpose. Most fall into one of three categories: beautifully illustrated coffee-table book, instructional how-to, or spiritual musings and/or lessons one can learn from gardening. ***Digging Deep* stands apart because it is the only book to demonstrate how the very act of gardening is itself a method for unearthing creativity and achieving a state of well-being. It focuses on the process of gardening, not merely the outcome.** It embraces both the art and craft of gardening—the craft being the how-to's, and the art being the greater act of letting go, trusting our instincts, and coming fully alive.

### Amazon Best Sellers

Our most popular products based on sales. Updated hourly.

Any Department

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Kindle eBooks

Nonfiction

Self-Help

Creativity

Happiness

Inner Child

Journal Writing

Memory Improvement

Motivational

Personal

Transformation

Self-Esteem

Spiritual

Stress Management

Best Sellers in Creativity Self-Help

Top 100 Paid Top 100 Free

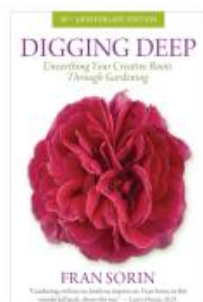


### 4 Points of Interest about *Digging Deep*

1. The book proposal for *Digging Deep* inspired a six-way bidding war, which was won by Warner Books (bought out by Hachette) for six figures.
2. *Digging Deep's 7 Stages of Creative Awakening* can help not only new and experienced gardeners, but non-gardeners as well, to open to possibilities, trust their instincts, let their imagination run wild, take risks, and live the life they're meant to—one filled with joy, well-being, and creativity.
3. *Digging Deep* is one of the few books—if not the only one—to teach garden design from the inside out.
4. *Digging Deep's* updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition** has a new foreword by the prolific Mind/Body/Soul author, Larry Dossey, M.D., and is endorsed by dozens of renowned gardening, spiritual, self-help, and creativity authors and leaders in their fields.

### Top 8 Benefits of *Digging Deep*

1. *Digging Deep*'s tips, tools, exercises, and guidance can help anyone who's in a rut to climb out of it and cultivate greater creativity, connection, abundance, and joy in life.
2. Focusing on gardening as a vehicle for creativity, transformation, well-being, and health, *Digging Deep* counteracts the current health crisis and growing sense of disconnection we're experiencing individually and collectively in America, which is being fostered by our technology-obsessed culture.
3. **The U.S. public spends more than 90% of their time indoors, leading an extremely sedentary, disconnected, unhealthy, and unnatural lifestyle.** *Digging Deep* helps you forge a bond with nature through a variety of hands-on exercises, including daily *Nature Walks*, where you practice mindfulness and simply "being" in nature. By doing so, all of your senses are reawakened and you start to feel more alive, exuberant, and connected.
4. Recent research funded by Disney shows that **65% of U.S. parents see it as a "very serious" problem that kids are not spending more time outdoors.** According to the survey, this is equal or a close second to their concerns about bullying, the quality of education, and obesity.



**Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening** Kindle eBook  
by Fran Sorin and Larry Dossey

Kindle Edition  
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★★★★★ 21  
#1 Best Seller in Gardening & Horticulture Essays  
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5. The creative, hands-on exercises in *Digging Deep* will enable you to flex your creativity muscles and **give you the skills and self-confidence** to envision and create the garden—and life—you've always dreamt of.
6. *Digging Deep* **helps you bring a life that's out of balance back into balance** by learning to integrate spending time in nature and focusing on the stuff that matters into the daily fabric of your life.
7. *Digging Deep* **helps you reclaim your playfulness**—not just in your garden, but with ideas, projects, and possibilities—allowing you to become one with your playful self.
8. *Digging Deep* offers you **a gentle way of opening up to possibility and a safe way of letting go** through step-by-step *bite size change*. This is different than most self-help books, which advocate "quick and easy" solutions that encourage people to take larger steps than most people can integrate into their lives. So people end up reading the book and feeling good for a while, yet they never make any significant or lasting changes in their lives.

## DIGGING DEEP ENDORSEMENTS



"This book has heaven's kiss of inspiration upon it! Fran Sorin is a muse, revealing how the art of gardening powerfully activates the creative force within, invigorating and unifying us in body, mind, and spirit."

**Michael Bernard Beckwith**, author of *Life Visioning*

"The garden is where any and all who are willing to be an apprentice to nature's mysteries can learn not just the secrets of the earth... but of themselves, as well. To gain this true self-knowledge, all that's required is *Digging Deep*. Thanks to Fran Sorin for reminding us of this essential spiritual instruction."

**Guy Finley**, author of *The Secret of Letting Go*



"Captivating and enchanting! Fran Sorin understands that a garden should be a playground for our imaginations, and a place that is as lively, entertaining, and ever-changing as our own creative spark. A must-read for anyone who wishes to find themselves in the garden—and for everyone who didn't know they could."

**Amy Stewart**, author of *The Drunken Botanist*

"**Digging Deep** is a gardening bible for the disbeliever—a gentle and inspiring guide to the spiritual journey awaiting you in your own backyard. Sorin tells anyone who has ever attempted, abandoned or avoided gardening exactly how and where to start. Beautiful, helpful, and wise."

**Karen Maezen Miller**, author of *Paradise in Plain Sight*



"*Digging Deep* strikes a deep chord about the sacred act of gardening and humankind's primal need to get our hands in the earth and connect with nature. For Fran Sorin, gardening is a playful ritual that transcends our normal consciousness—it's pure rapture and a profound tool for creating meaning and beauty. *Digging Deep* is a spiritual treasure."

**Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.**, author of *Eager to Love*

"Fran Sorin is a philosopher-gardener whose love for plants and people shines through every page. *Digging Deep* is a lens that gives a fresh look at the art of growing things. By connecting gardening with what is most fundamental in our own lives, she shows how it is a creative pursuit that nourishes body and soul."

**Debra Lee Baldwin**, author of *Designing with Succulents*



## DIGGING DEEP REVIEWS



“Fran Sorin knows how gardening takes root in the soul. Her book abounds with inspiring stories and activities to get you into the garden and to get the most out of it. Whether you’re a beginner or a lifetime gardener, you’ll find much to celebrate in *Digging Deep*.”  
*Priscilla Totten, Senior Editor, USA Weekend Magazine*

“Sorin doesn’t start her text with questions about what kind of soil you have, or whether your garden enjoys eastern sunshine. She begins with unexpected musings such as the nature of the

## San Antonio Express-News

reader’s creative life. Can you cook? She asks. Did you design your wardrobe in an interesting way? Sorin sees the

garden as an extension of the gardener, and *Digging Deep* is devoted to coaxing the unique statement out of the person, not the soil. As such, it is more a self-help book than gardening text.” *Retha Oliver for San Antonio Express-News*



“If I were categorizing this book, I’d invent the term ***garden therapy***. Sorin wants to help gardeners (including indoor gardeners) think about their gardening wants and needs, while understanding and accepting the limitations imposed by their garden spaces. Though the chapters include instruction on actual plant cultivation, the reason to

read *Digging Deep* is for its lessons in creativity. Your garden is a perfect place to imagine, explore, play, work, risk, share, and celebrate.” *Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Staff Pick*



“From wishing and hoping to weeding and hoeing, Sorin enthusiastically guides gardeners every step of the way, helping them to learn how to make choices and sharpen skills, celebrate successes, and embrace changes from a more creative perspective.”

*Carol Haggas for The American Library Association*

## Booklist

“Sorin views gardening as the perfect place to begin one’s creative reawakening.” *Booklist Reviews*

“This book is not just another step by step garden design book. It is a fascinating look into the mental and psychological processes of garden design. Fran works to awaken and inspire the



gardener to design a personal and unique garden that has meaning to its owner. The book is broken up into seven design stages. Fran says these techniques can be used to unleash creativity and that gardening empowers us to go on to be successful in other parts of

our lives. If you’re interested in jump-starting your creativity to help you plan and make a unique garden that reflects your personal style, you should have a copy of *Digging Deep* on your bookshelves.” *Katelyn Thomas for BellaOnline.com*





**FRAN SORIN****Short Author Bio**

Fran Sorin is an author, garden and creativity expert, and deep ecologist. She is also a veteran of the media—as a media trainer, broadcaster, journalist, celebrity spokesperson, and inspirational speaker. Fran has trained top managers, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, senators, and a U.S. presidential candidate on how to deal with the media in a compelling, effective, and authentic manner. To learn more about Fran, visit [FranSorin.com](http://FranSorin.com).

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**Medium Author Bio**

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Her book, *Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening*, was groundbreaking when published in 2004. It was the first book to address gardening in the context of creativity and as a tool for well-being and personal transformation. The updated **10th Anniversary Edition** is even more vital today, because our culture has become increasingly obsessed with technology and progressively more nature deprived.

### Long Author Bio

Fran Sorin is an author, garden and creativity expert, and deep ecologist. She is also a veteran of the media—as a media trainer, broadcaster, journalist, celebrity spokesperson, and inspirational speaker. Fran has trained top managers, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, senators, and a U.S. presidential candidate on how to deal with the media in a compelling, effective, and authentic manner.

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From the moment that Fran decided she wanted to share her passion for gardening with a large audience and approached the local Fox TV station in Philadelphia about doing some gardening TV features, she became a fixture on the TV circuit. She spent years as a gardening authority on Philadelphia's Fox and NBC stations, was the regular gardening contributor on NBC's *Weekend Today Show*, and made several appearances on CNN, MSNBC, Lifetime, HGTV, DIY, and the Discovery Channel. She has also been a celebrity spokesperson for OurHouse.com, MSNBC, and Garden Weasel.



Fran is celebrating her tenth year as a CBS Radio News correspondent. Her *Digging Deep* gardening features are heard several times a week on CBS Radio stations throughout the United States. She has also written dozens of articles about gardening and well-being for USA Weekend Magazine, Radius Magazine, and iVillage. Fran was instrumental in developing iVillage's Garden Channel and was their "Green Thumb" gardening expert.

She has spent more than twenty-five years initiating and working on community projects that have served the diverse community of West Philadelphia, including Radnor Recycles for Refugees and Shooting for the Stars, a non-profit organization and motivational program for elementary students. She has recently initiated a community garden and learning center on the grounds of a church in an underprivileged neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

Even prior to becoming an ordained interfaith minister, Fran was ministering to folks—whether she was taking on the role as a garden designer, a media trainer, a TV personality, or a radio host. Fran's greatest strengths are in connecting with audiences and individuals and



galvanizing them to take action ... whether speaking live, on TV, or on the radio, or through her writing. In these tumultuous and technologically obsessed times, when so many of us feel stuck, scared, and disconnected from ourselves and others, her optimistic, grounded values and empowering message are needed more than ever.

Fran is a graduate of the University of Chicago with Honors in Psychology and One Spirit Interfaith Seminary. She's a co-creator of [GardeningGoneWild.com](http://GardeningGoneWild.com)—a highly respected blog of garden authors, photographers, broadcasters, and teachers. On her website, [FranSorin.com](http://FranSorin.com), Fran blogs weekly about creativity, spirituality and gardening.

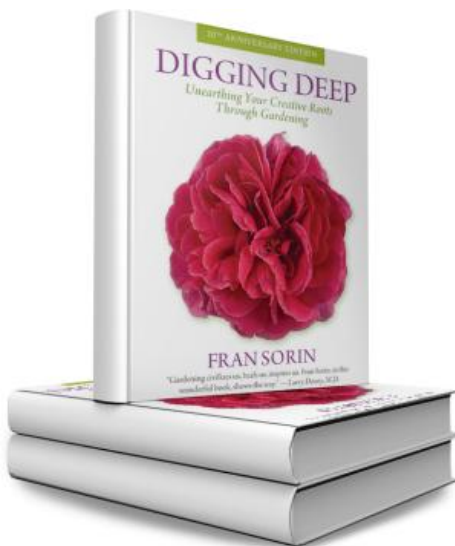
### 5 Fun Facts you didn't know about me

1. I created a gardening program for underprivileged Philadelphia elementary school children in conjunction with Chanticleer Gardens (done under the auspices of a non-profit motivational program I initiated, called Shooting for the Stars).
2. I give away flowers on the street to strangers in order to bring smiles to their faces and help them experience the effects of a random act of kindness. Others have felt inspired to join me. I've named this grass roots movement, **Give A Flower, Get A Smile**.
3. The local elementary school used to bring students to my garden as a field trip or to celebrate the last day of the school year. Whenever a kid told me that they weren't allowed to get dirty, I made it a point of encouraging them to get their hands in the soil (I usually had them dig something up for me or sow some seeds).
4. Both of my kids were home-schooled in middle and high school. They were raised in a household filled with gardening and music
5. From the time I was eight years old, I was drawn to the magical beauty, scent, and power of flowers.

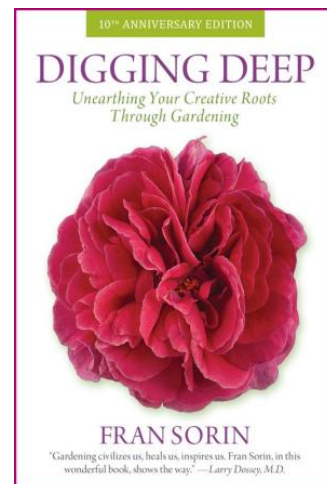
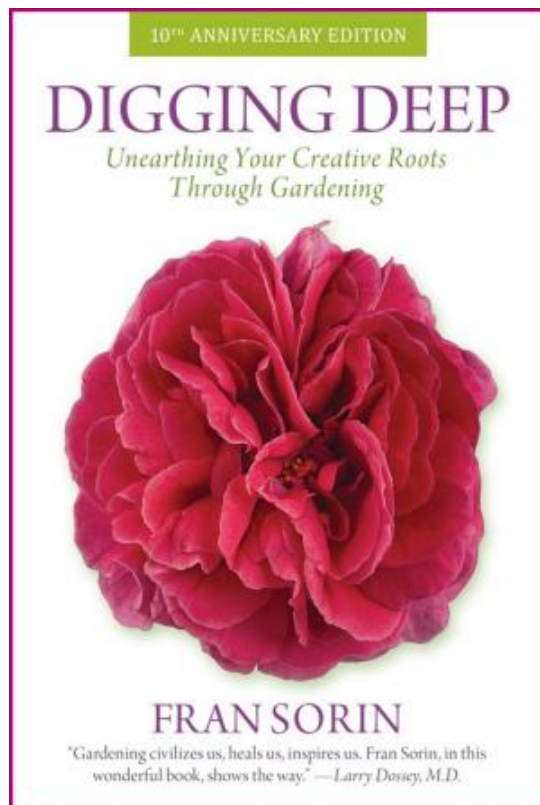


## PHOTOS

If you need a high resolution version of any of these photos  
send an email to [Fran@FranSorin.com](mailto:Fran@FranSorin.com).







## MEDIA

Fran Sorin is a veteran of the media—as a media trainer, broadcaster, journalist, celebrity spokesperson, and inspirational speaker.

After leaving a lucrative career as a broadcast executive (she was one of the top female executives in the ranks of Philadelphia broadcasting), Fran trained top managers, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, senators, and a U.S. presidential candidate on how to deal with the media in a compelling, effective, and authentic manner.

### Television



From the moment that Fran decided she wanted to share her passion for gardening with a large audience and approached the local Fox TV station in Philadelphia about doing some gardening TV features, she became a fixture on the TV circuit. She spent years as a gardening authority on Philadelphia's Fox and NBC stations, was a regular gardening expert on NBC's *Weekend Today Show*, and made several appearances on CNN, MSNBC, Lifetime, HGTV, DIY, and the Discovery Channel.

### Radio



Audiences are drawn to Fran's infectious, down-to-earth enthusiasm and innate ability to make even non-gardeners want to run out and buy some flowers to plant. Fran always says that the years of hosting her Saturday morning call-in gardening talk show called *The Gutsy Gardener* on the BigTalker, 1210am in Philadelphia, initiated her into the ministry. Her regular listeners woke up early to tune in and discuss not only what was happening in their garden, but to share their feelings about the awesomeness and spirituality of nature, as well as several other topics.

For the past 10 years, Fran's weekly *Digging Deep* gardening features for CBS Radio News have been heard on CBS Radio stations throughout the country—including WCBS 880am—New York City, WBZ—Boston, KCBS—San Francisco, WWJ—Detroit, CFRB—Toronto, WBEN—Buffalo, and several others.



## Print



Woman's Day

yoga JOURNAL

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Fran has been the *Garden Smart* columnist for *USA Weekend* magazine, reaching 51 million readers across the country. She's also written articles for *Radius Magazine*, *Woman's Day*, *Soap Opera Digest*, and *Animal Fair Magazine*. In addition to sharing her advice through the columns and articles she's written, Fran has been quoted in a number of newspapers and periodicals including being interviewed by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* several times and being quoted in the *Yoga Journal*.

## Online



GARDENING GONE WILD



Home LIVING BETTER 50



Fran was instrumental in developing the gardening channel for iVillage.com where she wrote several dozen articles and was their “green thumb” gardening expert for years. She has written articles for a number of blogs and websites, as well as been interviewed or quoted extensively online. Some of the websites you'll see Fran Sorin and *Digging Deep* on include gardening and nature websites such as RedDirtRamblings.com, GardeningwithConfidence.com and Ecology.com, spirituality websites such as YogaJournal.com and PoweredByIntution.com, personal transformation websites such as Everydaybright.com, TheBoldLife.com and AbundanceTapestry.com, and baby boomer websites such as BoomerTurnOns.com and LivingBetter50.com, to name just a few.

Fran's home online is [FranSorin.com](http://FranSorin.com), where she blogs about creativity, spirituality and gardening. She's also a co-creator of [GardeningGoneWild.com](http://GardeningGoneWild.com) —a highly respected blog of garden authors, photographers, broadcasters, and teachers.

## Celebrity Spokesperson



Fran's authority in the gardening field, her sparkling personality, and her great communication skills have led to her being tapped—throughout the years—as a celebrity spokesperson for OurHouse.com, MSNBC, and Garden Weasel.



## PRESS

### Fran Sorin – *Digging Deep* Interview Questions



1. How can “black thumb” gardeners use gardening as a tool for gaining self-confidence and embracing their inner “green thumb?”
2. How can over-achievers use gardening to learn to “let go?”
3. What tips can you offer parents to help them get their kids to spend more time in nature and learn to enjoy gardening?
4. What benefits can someone get from gardening, if they can only spend 30 minutes a day or less doing it?
5. What are the 7 warning signs that you’re not living the life you’re meant to?
6. How does gardening counteract the profound disconnection that so many folks are feeling today?
7. What lessons do individuals learn in the garden that they can use in other areas of their life?
8. What is the **secret sauce** that your *7 Stages of Creative Awakening* offers to people (with its focus on working from the inside out) that helps them design more creative gardens and lives?





## Speaking

Audiences are drawn to Fran Sorin's infectious, down-to-earth enthusiasm and innate ability to make even non-gardeners want to run out and buy some flowers to plant. Whether giving a keynote address at an art museum event, designing a day-long workshop for mid-level executives of a major corporation, creating a weekend workshop for women who want to access more of their creative selves, or giving a presentation at standing-room only gardening venues, Fran's knowledge of and passion for the subjects she discusses guarantee a home run.

In working with groups, Fran uses her years of Improvisational Theatre training to break down barriers, free people of their self-consciousness, and enable a sense of trust and play to develop within the group. Within an eight-hour workshop, the transformation that members experience is astounding. They walk in tightly buttoned-up, self-conscious, and reserved, and literally skip out at the end of the day feeling empowered, playful, creative, imaginative, and significantly more willing to take risks—both individually and in groups.

Fran speaks on topics related to creativity, connection, gardening, spirituality, and joyful living. She can customize her presentation to meet an organization's specific needs and desired outcome.

## Personal Development Speaking Topics

- Fran's Insider Secrets on How to Live Creatively Every Day
- 7 Warning Signs that You're Not Living the Life You're Meant To—And What You Can Do About It
- How Mindfulness Can Transform an Ordinary Day into an Extraordinary One
- The Art of Slow Living: How to Create a Life Filled with Beauty and Joy
- Joy Is The New Success: How To Get It and Keep It

## Gardening Speaking Topics

- How Gardening and Being In Nature are Essential Tools for Your Well-Being
- How Gardening Can Help Over-Achievers Learn to Let Go
- How to Create the Garden—and Life—you've Always Dreamt Of: The 7 Stages of Creative Awakening
- Playing With Flowers: How This Simple Exercise Is a Powerful Tool for Unleashing Your Imagination and Playfulness In the Garden...and Life
- How to Use the Most Resilient, Drought and Pest Resistant Perennials to Create a Sustainable and Magnificent Garden

## Spirituality Speaking Topics

- How Gardening Is a Gateway to Spirituality as a Playful Experience
- Spirituality Is Not an Act: It Is a State of Being
- How Being In Nature Can Help You Let Go of Control and Access Your Spirituality
- 7 Ways to Use Gardening as a Tool for Spiritual Awakening

**TIP SHEET #1*****13 Reasons Why Gardening Is Good For Your Health***

The results of a multitude of research is now showing what gardeners have intrinsically known for generations:

**Gardening is good for your health.**

Now more than ever, as our culture becomes more technologically obsessed and increasingly nature deprived, this information is critical to digest and embrace. The reason why? Because **our country is in a national health crisis with substantial economic and social implications.**

Here are some statistics that bear this out:

- The U.S. public spends more than 90% of their time indoors, leading an extremely sedentary, disconnected, unhealthy, and unnatural lifestyle.
- The latest statistics show that 33% of U.S. adults are obese, incurring \$148 billion in medical costs annually and contributing to 18% of U.S. adult deaths.
- Publicly available data shows U.S. healthcare costs are the highest per capita in the world—and that amount continues to increase.
- Recent research funded by Disney shows that **65% of U.S. parents see it as a “very serious” problem that their kids are not spending more time outdoors.** According to the survey, this is equal or a close second to their concerns about bullying, the quality of education, and obesity. **Preschoolers spend about 12 hours a week outside, and by the age of 16, our children are spending less than 7 hours a week in nature.**

Ideally, these statistics will put some fire in your belly to spend more time outdoors in nature and gardening. But those of you who may need more hard core facts to help galvanize you to get your hands in the dirt, below are:

**13 Reasons Why Gardening Is Good For Your Health**

**1. Gardening can reduce your risk of stroke** (along with other activities such as jogging and swimming) as reported in “Stroke: Journal of The American Heart Association.”

**2. Gardening burns calories.** Gardening is considered moderate to high-intensity exercise. [According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), you can burn up to 330 calories during just one hour of light gardening and yard work — more than lifting weights for the same amount of time. The National Institute of Health goes so far as to recommend 30 to 45 minutes of gardening three to five times a week as part of a good strategy.

**3. Heavy gardening is not only helpful in weight maintenance but also in reducing the risk of heart disease and other life threatening diseases.** Just 30 minutes of moderate-level physical activity a few times a week can prevent and control high blood pressure. In fact,

gardening scored a place on the [The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's](#) recommendation list for battling high blood pressure.



**4. Gardening decreases the likelihood of osteoporosis.** When you dig, plant, weed, and engage in repetitive tasks that require strength or stretching, all of the major muscle groups are getting a good work out.

**5. Gardening is a stress buster.** As a matter of fact, it may be an even more effective stress buster than other leisure activities. In a study in the Netherlands (as reported by CNN), two groups of students were told to either read indoors or garden for thirty minutes AFTER completing a stressful task. The group that gardened reported being in a better mood than the group that read. And they also exhibited lower levels of cortisol, the stress hormone.

**6. Being surrounded by flowers improves one's health.** In behavioral research conducted at Rutgers University by Jeanette M. Haviland-Jones, Ph.D., the results showed that flowers are a natural and healthful moderator of moods and have an immediate impact on happiness, a long term positive effect on mood, and makes for more intimate connections between individuals



**7. Gardening is a way of making meaning out of our lives.** Being in the garden and feeling a profound connection to the land affords us the opportunity to focus on beauty and inspires us to experience feelings of awe, gratitude, and abundance.

**8. The act of gardening enables us to enter the 'zone', also known as an altered state of consciousness**—similar to what a jogger or one who practices yoga or mediation can experience. This transcendent state is a magical and spiritual place where one experiences the best of who she/he is.

**9. It is likely that gardening and flowers serve as a means for survival; or in Darwinian terms, “survival of the fittest.”** For more than 5,000 years, people have cultivated flowers. There must be a reason why this practice continues to exist. As Michael Pollan has written, “It was the flower that first ushered the idea of beauty into the world the moment, long ago, when floral attraction emerged as an evolutionary strategy.”





**10. Digging in the soil has actual health and “mood boosting” benefits.** Larry Dossey, M.D., who wrote the new foreword for [\*Digging Deep's 10th Anniversary Edition\*](#), and author of [\*One Mind: How Our Individual Mind is Part of a Great Consciousness and Why It Matters\*](#) writes: "The importance of gardening and ‘digging deep’ is written into our physiology. Evidence for what's called the ‘hygiene hypothesis’ is abundant. **Briefly, we know that children who are exposed to dirt in the formative years develop healthier, stronger immune systems when compared to children whose parents keep them squeaky clean, and they have a lower incidence of asthma, eczema and allergies later in life. Exposure to dirt in childhood promotes good health.**"

Christopher Lowry, Ph.D., an assistant professor of integrative physiology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, has been injecting mice with *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a harmless bacteria commonly found in soil, and has found that they increase the release and metabolism of serotonin in parts of the brain that control cognitive function and mood—much like serotonin-boosting antidepressant drugs do.

**11. Gardening Improves Relationships and Compassion.** Research shows that people who spend extended lengths of time around plants tend to have better relationships with others. “This is due to measurable increases in feelings of compassion; another effect of exposure to ornamental plants. Studies have shown that people who spend more time around plants are much more likely to try and help others, and often have more advanced social relationships. People who care for nature are more likely to care for others, reaching out to their peers and forming shared bonds resulting from their common interests. Extended exposure to nature and wildlife increases people’s compassion for each other as it increases people’s compassion for the environment in which they live. In short, being around plants can help to improve relationships between people and increase their concern and empathy toward others.”

**12. Gardening may lower the risk of dementia.** Some research suggests that the physical activity associated with gardening can help lower the risk of developing dementia. Two separate studies that followed people in their 60s and 70s for up to 16 years found, respectively, that those who gardened regularly had a 36% and 47% lower risk of dementia than non-gardeners, even when a range of other health factors were taken into account

**13. Gardening strengthens your immune system.** While you’re outdoors basking in the sun, you’ll also soak up plenty of vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium. In turn, calcium helps keep your bones strong and your immune system healthy.

**TIP SHEET #2*****10 Ways to Discover Spirituality in the Garden***

After spending enough time on all fours digging, planting, and weeding, and hanging out with other gardeners, you often hear them commenting on how they can spend hours in the garden and not even know it. They use words like, “Zen state,” “being in the zone,” “transcending everyday consciousness,” and many more.

What they’re all essentially saying is that in some shape or form, they experience the essence of spirituality while gardening. And for those of us who are able to access this sweet spot, it truly is heaven.



Using the garden as a tool for your spiritual practice is a no-brainer. And if like most folks, you need a few tips to get you going in the right direction, here they are:

- 1. Set an intent.**  
Perceive your time in the garden as your “garden practice,” a tool to access spirituality—no different than meditation or yoga.
- 2. Designate a specific amount of time when you can work quietly with no interruptions.**  
You wouldn’t have a cell phone or allow your children to interrupt you in a yoga class or while meditating. Your time in the garden should be treated with the same amount of respect. It’s your sacred time.
- 3. Think in terms of process, not results.**  
The goal is NOT how much weeding you get done. Rather, it’s how much you allow yourself to enjoy and open up to what the process can offer you.
- 4. Move slowly and breathe deeply.**  
Gardening with intent is a practice. By slowing down and breathing deeply, you’re changing your physiology.
- 5. Take the time to observe.**  
Open up your eyes, looking at both the details and the landscape. Try to see things differently than you usually do. If you normally pass the maple tree and think “Pretty,” how about stopping and touching its bark or grabbing a leaf and looking at it up close. Doing so can open up an entirely new world and will expand your powers of observation.

**6. Let your mind wander and enter a state of flow.**

If you find yourself thinking about “to do” lists, gently guide yourself to either what you’re presently doing or to a happy time from your childhood when you were in nature.

**7. Say a prayer of thanks for the beauty that surrounds you.**

It doesn’t need to be fancy. One sentence that comes from your heart is all that’s needed.

**8. Talk with the plants.**

Even something simple like looking at a rose and thinking, “Aren’t you a beauty,” or standing under an old tree and thinking, “Hey old fella, I bet you’ve experienced and seen a lot in your life,” are forms of communicating.

**9. Relax your body.**

Mind and body are interconnected. Being aware of muscle tightness and consciously letting go of tension enables you to sink into the process and open up to an expanded awareness.

**10. Look for magic.**

The more deeply you connect with your own nature, as well as the nature that surrounds you, the more you’ll start looking for, and seeing, magic everywhere.



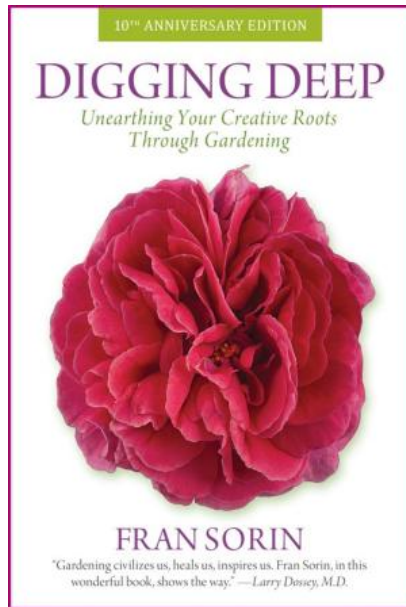


## DIGGING DEEP EXCERPT

## Taking Risks

*“He who plants a tree, plants a hope.”*

—Thomas Jefferson



Very early on each spring, when I start to look around my garden and envision what I want to plant that year, I always go through the same process of longing for the familiar. Perhaps the roses of last year were particularly fragrant, or the love-lies-bleeding plants especially enticing, and I think, *Ooh, I'll do that again*. But then comes the familiar tug inside that reminds me that my garden is my laboratory for my own growth, and that I grow only when I take risks. That is the tug towards a newer, more unveiled version of myself, and I quickly do an about-face and start thinking about what I can do differently this year.

Whenever we create, we are taking risks. The most inspired creations are born of deep risk—leaps of faith taken by people who dare to venture into new territory despite their fear, despite the odds, and despite the uncertainty of how it will turn out. In creating Sundance, Robert Redford put everything he had on

the line—including his reputation, money, and reserve of energy—to build his vision of a creative laboratory for filmmakers in the mountains of Utah. A lot of people thought he was just plain crazy to launch such an ambitious vision outside of the typical entertainment centers of New York and Los Angeles—not to mention his intent to preserve hundreds of acres of unspoiled land that plenty of other people would have developed for profit. Yet today, Sundance has blossomed into a cultural icon with a yearly film festival that rivals Cannes. The surrounding land remains pristine and undeveloped as far as the eye can see.

Taking any risk impacts us way down deep, in the tectonic plates of our very existence. In order to make something new, we need to relinquish the delicate reality that is right now. To create a new business, we must leave our existing work. To make a house our home, we must take down what is there and create our imprint. To create a child, we must give up some of our independence. In all creative endeavors, we risk the fear of failure in a society that is very success-oriented (*What will happen to me if I fail?*). We risk not being accepted (*What will people think?*). We risk giving up the familiar, the comfortable (*What if I don't like the new reality that unfolds?*). Yet in the face of all this looming threat, we, as artists of life, continue to brave on and take risks because deep down, we know that risks are what pave the path to our healthiest and best selves.



True risks are not arbitrary. I think we take risks based on our deepest desires. Anytime something feels like a risk, we are usually looking into the face of something we dearly want. If we weren't, it wouldn't feel so weighted, nor the choice so infused with emotion. Each time we become aware of these desires and act on them, we get one step closer to our essence. If the results turn out well, fabulous! Our confidence in our instincts grows. If they don't, that's okay, too—we learn something about what doesn't work for us.

Simply trying something new is not necessarily the same as taking a risk. Trying new things out of curiosity is experimenting. Trying new things *when there is something very real at stake* is taking a risk. Trying a new lasagna recipe is an experiment—trying a new lasagna recipe when you're throwing an important dinner party is a risk. Going out on a date with someone you are mildly interested in is an experiment—getting involved with someone you have intense feelings for is a risk. Experiments are wonderful ways to test the waters and see what you like and what you want, but it is the acts of daring that stretch you.

This isn't about taking risks for the thrill of it, or for the heck of it. That's adrenaline—or counteracting boredom. This is about consciously pushing the boundaries of who you are right now in order to see who you might become. It's about testing yourself in the face of your fears and finding the grit to move forward in spite of them—giving your dreams a chance to fly even if you may very well land right on your butt.

A few years ago, I met a young couple at a yoga retreat who were originally from Cambridge, Massachusetts. They both came from respected families—Allison's mother was a professor at Harvard, and Jessie's family was from old Boston money. These two kids were a perfect match—they were both very adventurous, and neither seemed to fit the bill of privilege they were born into. They were generous and relaxed spirits and were just a delight to be around. It didn't surprise me at all when they told me they had just moved to a small, rural town in New Hampshire and were spending their days renovating an old barn they purchased to make it into a home where they could one day raise their future kids. They had created a whole new life for themselves.

What was so fascinating was hearing their story about how this came to pass. They seemed so young and carefree, but one evening, as Allison and I lingered over dessert and tea, she told me about how big a risk it had felt to them to leave behind all the cultural expectations that had been put on them. They went back and forth about this decision for a long time. They desperately wanted to live a rural life, but they were worried about how their families would react and about whether they would be depriving their future children of an easier life. Ultimately, Alison told me, it was Jessie who said, "If we don't do this, we'll always wonder if we made the right choice. But if we do it, either way, we'll get to find out." And there it was—the clearest reason to take any risk in life.

You've already heard me say that a garden is the most forgiving of mediums, and so it is one of the easiest ways to learn to take risks. My garden contains a lot of risks I've taken over the years, some big, some small. There were the mini-risks, like early on when I pulled out the

requisite evergreen bushes that come standard with every suburban front lawn. People from the neighborhood were literally lining up to take them, and I thought, *Yikes. . . am I really doing this?* It was a little scary because suddenly I was labeled “different” and because I had no idea what I was going to put in place of those big gaping holes. Destroying an existing reality before the new one appears in its place can be deeply unsettling, but also exhilarating at the same time.

Then there were the big risks, like the six huge robinia trees I ordered. I had seen these gorgeous trees when I was in England and immediately fell in love with their yellow and green leaves. I had a vision of six of them, arranged in two sets of three on either side of my walkway in triangular configurations. This wasn’t something I had seen done anywhere—most trees are planted symmetrically on either side of a pathway. But I really wanted these, and I really wanted that layout, so after checking with a colleague to make sure I wasn’t creating an overgrown patch of trees waiting to happen, I ordered them. Believe me, I was well aware this could look very strange! Once I got them in the ground, the trees grew and took on a life of their own. They look magnificent and are to this day one of the focal points of my garden.

Every single new planting can be a risk. You spend time, energy, and money. . . all things that have a lot of value. And you never really know how things will turn out. But to me, half the fun is the anticipation of what will be and how I will grow as a result.

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**Fran Sorin** is a garden and creativity expert, deep ecologist, and the author of *Digging Deep: Unearthing Your Creative Roots Through Gardening*—updated **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition**. She’s also a veteran of the media—as a media trainer, broadcaster, journalist, celebrity spokesperson, and inspirational speaker. Fran has trained top managers, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, senators, and a U.S. presidential candidate on how to deal with the media in a compelling, effective, and authentic manner. She blogs weekly at [FranSorin.com](http://FranSorin.com) and her group gardening blog, [GardeningGoneWild.com](http://GardeningGoneWild.com).

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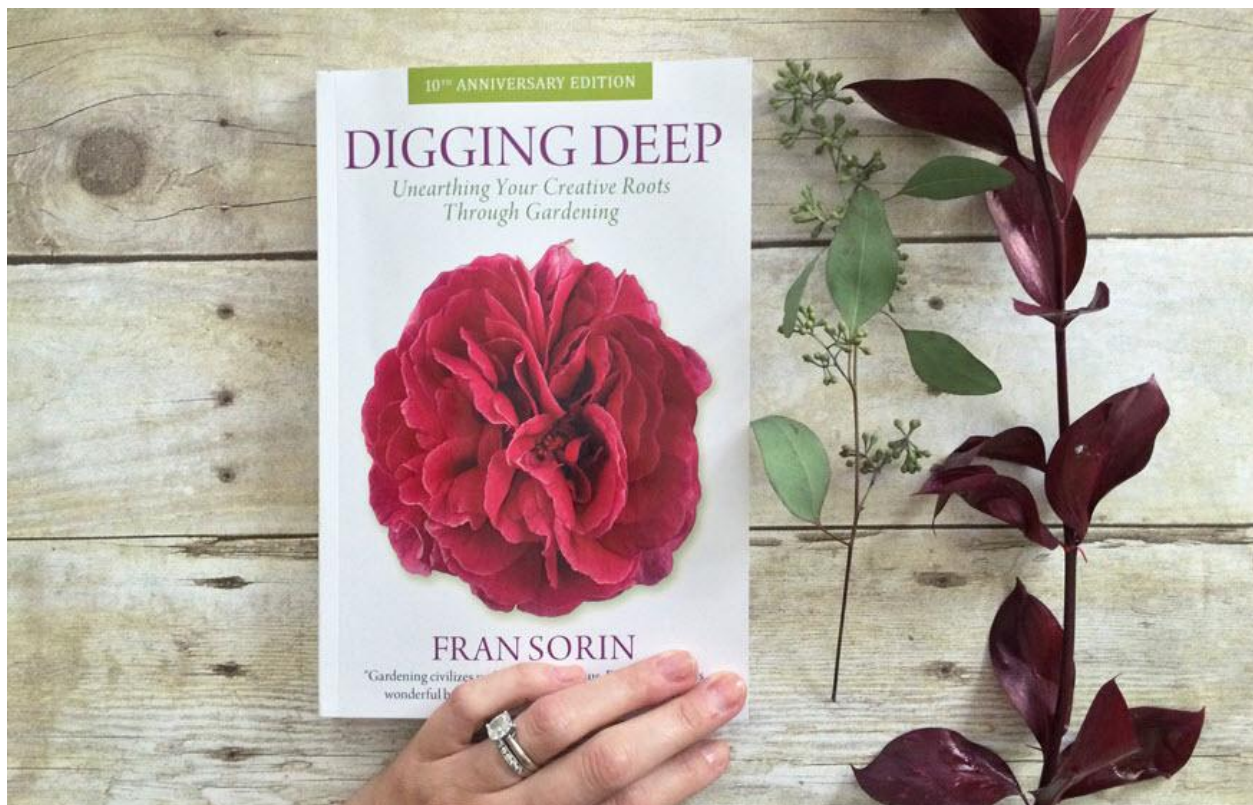


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