

AN INTERVIEW WITH

**Robert and Patricia Gussin, authors of
*What's Next...For You? The Gussin Guide to
Big Decisions, Big Changes, and Big Fun***

Whose idea was it to write *What's Next...For You*?

He Said: I'm the guilty one.

She Said: This was Bob's idea. At first I thought it was crazy, but before I knew it, I said, "Why Not?"

Which part of the process of writing *What's Next...For You* did you enjoy the most?

He Said: Rethinking how all this happened. It's a little less traumatic in hindsight.

She Said: I had fun putting my own spin on what Bob said happened.

Which part of the process of writing *What's Next...For You* did you enjoy the least?

He Said: Finishing it. I was having such a good time. I could have kept going, but it would have to be futuristic.

She Said: The worst part of writing is the typing process. Bob is coming up with his own answers to these questions, but guess what? He's going to ask me to type them!

What was your favorite part of writing as a team?

He Said: Sitting together and talking about all the crazy things we did.

She Said: When Bob writes, it comes out right—the first time. I need to re-do almost every word. With *What's Next...For You?*, I tried to emulate Bob and I learned a new free style of writing.

What was your least favorite part of writing as a team?

He Said: There was no least favorite. I love being part of Pat's team.

She Said: Bob and I write at a different pace and because we have so many competing demands on our time, staying in synch was tough.

How did the writing process work?

He Said: I wrote my outlook on how things happened and then Pat, after looking at my chapters wrote her impression either in separate chapters or combined with mine.

She Said: Bob took the lead, but after that we would each introduce the concepts that we felt were important.

In terms of writing, what do you admire most about your co-author?

He Said: Everything. Her brightness and her writing style. She puts thoughts together really well. And she usually appreciates my writing.

She Said: I truly do admire everything about my co-author even though I may sound irreverent at times.

What did you find to be the single biggest difference between writing fiction, and writing non-fiction?

He Said: Fiction is fun because you can be and do what you want. Non-fiction is fun if you really enjoy what you are writing about. In our case, we were writing about happy and enjoyable things. If it were sad non-fiction, I probably would not want to do it.

She Said: The truth. What we've written in What's Next for You? is the real us. Anything goes in fiction.

One of the themes of What's Next...For You? is what you call "thoughtful impulsiveness." How would you describe "thoughtful impulsiveness?"

He Said: We are not totally crazy and don't jump into things without thought. But we don't suffer from paralysis by analysis, either. We are impulsive but with some abbreviated thought given to our decisions. We don't agonize over them.

She Said: Thoughtful impulsiveness means having a "leap before you look" mentality. Life is so unpredictable. Anything can present at any time, so why not go for it?

Did you ever see yourself embarking on new careers post-retirement?

He Said: No. I realized that I still wasn't capable of being a pro-football or basketball player and so could not now pursue my childhood dreams. I thought that I would just sort of drift along and enjoy the spare time and something would come along. And it did!

She Said: I had no idea what I would do, but I knew that I would do something. But so drastically different? I couldn't have predicted that.

What do you enjoy most about publishing?

He Said: Meeting the authors and enjoying their talent and personalities. I also get a great kick out of seeing all of our finished books and feeling the pride of accomplishment.

She Said: I love discovering the talent of new authors and being able to turn their manuscripts into books that entertain, enlighten, and enrich.

What do you enjoy most about winemaking?

He Said: Walking in the vineyards and appreciating the beauty of the vines and the grapes and then drinking the wine.

She Said: Walking in the vineyards, touching the grapes, sampling them, and talking to the vines.

What's the best piece of advice you would give someone who wants to make a change but isn't sure where to start?

He Said: Ask someone who had been there for some advice.

She Said: Openness to your surroundings and following up on ideas which will pop up on your radar screen.

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Scale of one to ten – ten being most important – how important do you think it is to enjoy the work you do? Why?

He Said: Ten. If you aren't having fun, you shouldn't be doing it. Life is too short to spend a large part of it being unhappy.

She Said: In retirement-graduation, it has to be a ten, or why do it? If you have a family to support and don't enjoy your job, maybe a five. Important, but not so important as to overwhelm other realities.

What do you think is the most difficult part of making a change?

He Said: People are generally comfortable with the status quo even if they are not happy with it. Change is uncomfortable until you have made it and experience how great it can be.

She Said: Trying to plan for every contingency. Trying to answer every "what if?" because that can't be done and you'll end up doing nothing. Only one precaution, make sure you can live with the worst possible case scenario.

What single thing has surprised you most about your "retirement?"

He Said: That it completely disappeared, and I am having the greatest time imaginable.

She Said: How much fun it's been. I have always loved my profession and my career and there is no way that I could ever have predicted how much excitement and fun would lie ahead.

What do you hope readers will take away from What's Next...For You?

He Said; The feeling that at some points in your life, and particularly as you approach retirement, you need to reassess where you have been and where you think you may like to go. And then, follow some whims, take advantage of unexpected opportunities, take some chances, and make sure that you're having fun, or change again.

She Said: A conviction that it's never too late to start a new venture, to live your dream, or to just say "yes." In other words, graduate, don't retire.

What's next for you book-wise?

He Said: A mystery, I hope, but with some humor. Or another "guide" perhaps.

She Said: The working title for my next book is Abduction, a thriller about the kidnapping of two of three identical triplets. I am really excited about this story, which features a couple of characters from my previous books.