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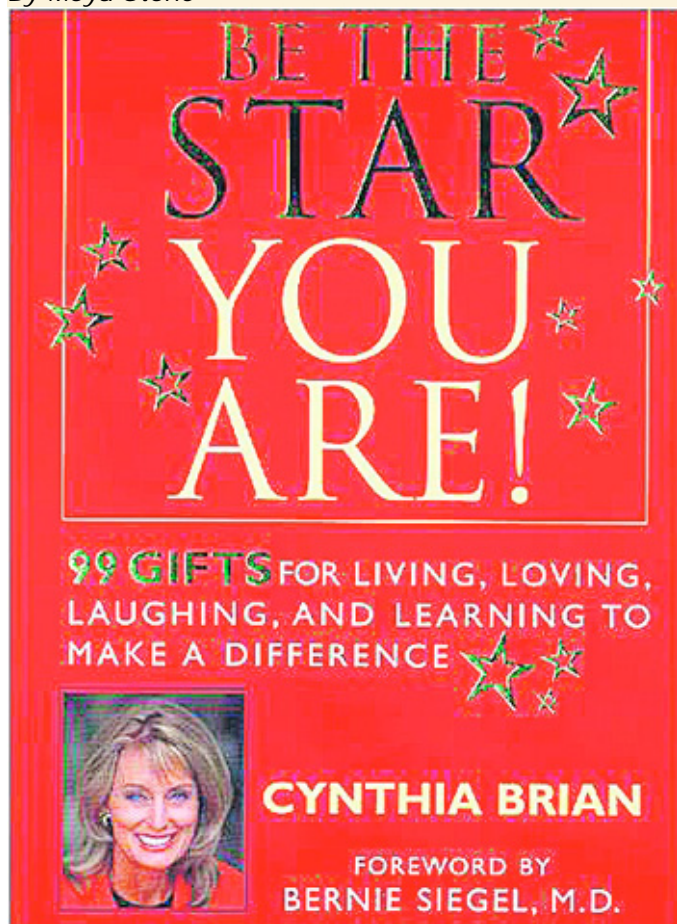
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## Local Dynamo Woman: Cynthia Brian

By Moya Stone



Cynthia Brian is one busy bee. In addition to her regular gardening column for the Lamorinda Weekly, she is a bestselling published author, a life empowerment coach, a radio host, a professional speaker, and the founder of the local non-profit group, Be The Star That You Are. And all this is after making strides as a Hollywood actress, model, and journalist. She speaks four languages, and is a wife and mother. Cynthia has accomplished enough for many lifetimes, but she is in no way finished. With a genuine interest in people, Cynthia has made it her mission to help individuals, especially youth, discover their passion and then go out and live it.

Born and raised on a farm in Napa Valley, Cynthia grew up driving tractors, planting and picking vegetables, fruits, and flowers in the family garden, and raising chickens and goats. The family had little money for extras, so Cynthia, the eldest of five children, learned early on a strong work ethic, sewing her own clothes and selling chicken eggs for fifty cents a dozen. She earned her own money for college, eventually attending UCLA and UC Berkeley. "I grew up with my hands in the dirt," says Cynthia. "I was always taught to dig deep." Cynthia makes a philosophical connection between life and what she learned on the farm, believing

that you have to dig deep to find out who you are. After she was voted Outstanding Teenager of California she was named teenage ambassador to Holland and served as foreign correspondent for several newspapers. It was this experience that laid the foundation for her media savvy.

Early in her adult life Cynthia carved out a career for herself as an actress working with such stars as Charles Bronson and Don Johnson. But she realized that the Hollywood celebrity lifestyle wasn't for her and decided to take what she'd learned in the business and become an acting coach. Since then she's coached hundreds of aspiring young actors, teaching them the ropes on everything from how to audition to getting headshots, and most importantly helping them connect to their star within. "Everyone is a star," says Cynthia. "We are all destined to live in star style. But what's important is to find out what makes us unique and special." Cynthia teaches that we have to be, before we can do. "Be who you are and everything else will follow," she says.

It is this philosophy that Cynthia imparts in her speaking engagements and to her clients. In her 2001 book, *Be The Star That You Are: 99 Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, and Learning to Make a Difference*, she says: "No one has ever walked the earth with your exact combination of inborn and acquired strengths, weaknesses, skills, foibles, talents, frailties, and experiences. The synergy of all these forces is what makes you strictly one of a kind ... this mixture is the source of your power, providing all the raw materials you need to become a star."

Cynthia and her husband settled in the Lamorinda area 28 years ago, first living in Orinda and now Moraga. They have a daughter, Heather Brittany, who just graduated from San Diego State. On World Talk Radio, Heather and Cynthia co-host a weekly radio show on which they interview authors and conduct a little mother/daughter chat they call, Tea for Two.

In 1999, Cynthia founded *Be the Star You Are*, a non-profit all volunteer organization that collects books and other resources and distributes to hospitals, juvenile halls, and other designated charities. In addition, the organization offers the opportunity for local teens to volunteer reviewing books, managing the incoming stock of books, and fundraising. Currently Cynthia has 25 active teens and in keeping with her philosophy the kids decide for themselves how they want to help, "I don't tell them what to do," says Cynthia, "I give them the opportunity to discover their own interests and then watch them shine."

Next up for Cynthia as she continues to sparkle her own star, is the publication of her second book in the *Be The Star That You Are* series; this one is for teens. She is currently seeking submissions, particularly from teens. For more information about Cynthia and all her work, go to the website, <http://www.bethestaryouare.org/index.html>.



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[back to top](#)

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