



LB Coaching

YOUR WEEKLY INSPIRATIONS

By Natalie Ekberg



YOUR WEEKLY INSPIRATION
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Your Goals

Why Stretching Your Goals is So Important

It is that time of year when those of you who are serious about your future and personal development start at least thinking about next year's goals, if not putting them in the right format already! Therefore I decided to take this opportunity to urge you to consider the following when setting your new goals.

There is the normal way which you have probably been doing for years, which is using any method that works for you. And then there is my suggestion, which is: take your goals and stretch them.

Achieving our goals can be a very satisfactory process. As a result, many people opt for goals that are safe, keeping in mind the certainty of their achievement. And yet, already at the point of deciding on the goals some of us know that we want much more than that. We keep the truth hidden even from ourselves in order not to run the risk of not achieving what we had set out to accomplish.

The pride and joy of our achievements, however, is not the only reason why we feel cautious when setting our goals. Another equally important reason is that we tend to look back and see what we have not been able to achieve. Based on that, we conclude that we are not capable of achieving more and, once again, keep our goals "close to the ground", thus guaranteeing their accomplishment.

But when setting our goals, the trick is to look forward, not backwards. Yes, we might not have achieved all we wanted but that only means that we were not feeling passionate enough about the goals we didn't touch on. I can guarantee you that the ones you felt strongly about you achieved or at least you started working on them.

The question remains: why should we then stretch our goals when we were not able to achieve all of the previous ones? For exactly that very reason. If you stretch your goals, your starting point towards their achievement will be set higher. If you start on a higher set point, you will finish on a higher set point too! Even if you don't accomplish your stretched and ambitious goal in all its glory, you will get much further in its achievement than if you had started it in its original, non-stretched version.

Stretching your goals also gives you a chance to be honest with yourself. Why are you aiming for a small apartment when in reality you want a big house? True, you might end up in a small house as a medium step but at least you have left the "small apartment" idea behind you and the real house of your dreams is somewhere on its way.

By stretching your goals you are letting the Universe know your true intentions. At the same time, by admitting your real desires to yourself you allow the passion for those desires to be a driving force behind any action you take towards achieving those goals. And there is nothing more powerful than working from your passion, and thus from your heart.



The Role of Creativity in Your Achievements

Many of us connect the word “creativity” with somebody who is artistically inclined, let’s say a writer, a painter or a designer. And yet, we are all creative beings: we just need to learn and understand how to use our creativity to our advantage. Once we manage that, it can do wonders to our lives. Let me give you a few examples.

If you have goals, using creativity for their achievement can be wonderful. Let’s say, you have a goal and you come up with 5 possible ways for its achievement. That is quite good. However, imagine if you use your creativity to think of another 5 – 10 possible ways of how to achieve your goal! Some of them might even get you to your desired outcome much faster!

To be more creative, you first have to believe that there are always more ways to get what you want. Then every time you revise your goals (that should be as often as possible), think of and commit yourself to trying another new way of achieving them. Over time, being creative about seeking different solutions will become second nature to you.

To help you trigger your creativity, keep asking yourself as many questions with regard to your problem as possible. Make sure they are focused, direct and honest. The same applies for the answers! Do all of this lightly and with joy, as your positive state of being will keep bringing more creative solutions to you.

Most importantly, throughout the process keep believing that the right answer is out there for you, just waiting to be discovered.

Once you have welcomed creativity into your life, you will soon realize just how many other situations you can use it. Whenever you face an important decision or hesitate over a complex problem, you will automatically begin looking at it from different angles and keep searching for as many options as possible until such time when you reach the decision or find a solution that suits you the most.



week 3

The Importance of Self-Commitment for Achievement of Your Goals

You have most probably heard of the drill called “how to achieve what you want”. Firstly, you need the clarity of your wishes and desires. Then you transform those into goals and start working on their fulfillment. And wow, sometimes you even have a good plan of how to go about achieving all those wonderful and exciting goals. And then...it all goes horribly wrong. Have you ever wondered why?

Some blame it on the lack of motivation, others on the lack of self-confidence, the rest on their parents, partners and bosses. In reality, the truth is much simpler. After all, there are still plenty of those who achieve their goals successfully. What is their secret?

It is simple, really – it is called self-commitment. Indeed, those who truly and unequivocally commit to the goals and plans they have set for themselves will succeed. By now you probably think: I can commit, no problem, but to carry on until the very end is hard, especially if things don't go smoothly. What to do then?

Firstly, it really helps to pick your goals carefully. Is your goal something you really, really, really want to do or is it something you have been thinking about for a while, so now you have moved it into the “goal” category? If self-commitment is your issue, you have to be very selective with what you want to focus on. That is not to say you should forget about your dreams and plans. I, for example, put down everything that comes to my mind and sounds like fun onto my “to do” list. I don't really care when those wishes become goals; I check them often and when I feel the time is right and I am ready, I pick some to work on. Thus at any given moment I only have goals that really inspire me and move me forward.

Another useful way to not get distracted is to split your goals into as many tiny mini-steps as needed. Performing small tasks usually doesn't require too much self-commitment, as long as you are committed enough to move onto the next step.

Preparing a written contract about finalizing the goal and signing it, works wonders for many people. Others prefer writing notes in their journals.

The bottom line is, if you want to succeed in achieving your goal, you need to stay connected to it. If you are connected, you are committed. It works in other areas of life and it works when you want to achieve your goals. Good luck and keep going!



Success is the Inner Game

How many people do you know who by the usual standards should not be successful at something and yet they are? How many colleagues have you observed who worked the same hours, managed similar projects and overall appeared to do the same, and yet their career sky-rocketed while others remained in the same position for many more years? What is that special something that determines that one person will become mediocre and the other one will be a huge success?

If you are guessing the strength of the desire, you are getting close. Indeed, we all know people whose desire for something was so strong, that there was nothing in this world that would stop them. However, this desire needs to be coupled with a sheer determination and an unwavering commitment. I have a friend who went through 9 consecutive IVF treatments in order to have a baby. Her position was: I will keep going until it happens. No other option existed for her. (Note – She did get the baby at the end). If you really want to succeed at something, this is the level of desire, determination and commitment you need to possess. “I will not stop until I get there”, needs to be your mantra.

However, in order to succeed but not get exhausted in the process, there are a few things to remember. Firstly, be sure that you invest your commitment and determination into something that really is your true desire. If that is the case, all your efforts will be easy. You will “enjoy the ride” and the results will come faster.

Another, equally important, step is to be able to “detach” yourself from the outcome. If your desires don't come through by the time you wanted in the form you expected, don't give up. Instead, relax into “when” and “how” and keep expecting your desire will be fulfilled soon.

Most importantly, behave as if the success you so want has been achieved long ago and now you are already in the phase of “living it”. When you sincerely act as if success is your middle name, it is only a question of time before it becomes so.



Your Self-Confidence

5 Quick Strategies for Building Your Self-Confidence

Many people believe that confidence is something we were either born with or not. In some cases this might be true but it has also been proven that anybody can become confident at any point in their lives, if they give it their attention and follow up with appropriate action. If you need to work on your confidence, here are 5 quick strategies that might help you kick-start the process towards greater self-confidence.

- 1.) Understand that building your confidence is a process, not an instant miracle. Due to the “developing” character of the process, you need to practice it. The more you practice, the faster you will get there. If you find yourself in a situation where you would usually bow out of it (for example, making a speech at your friend’s wedding), commit yourself to it instead. Then prepare yourself properly and just do it! Next time around, the very same situation will be much easier.
- 2.) Spend some time every day imagining yourself as if you were as confident as you would like to be. How would you behave in certain situations? How would you act when facing certain people? Pretend you are behaving the way you would like to already. Once you find yourself in those situations in real life, it will become much easier to act as that confident person you would love to be.
- 3.) A truly confident person can be confident in a “quiet” way. When you start building your self-confidence and succeed, make sure you don’t “overdo it” and become arrogant. That would only show to the outside world that when it comes to being genuinely confident, you are, well, not quite there!
- 4.) There is also a huge difference between the reactions confident people have towards their mistakes, compared to non-confident people. They take these in their stride; learn from them and move on, trying to avoid making the same mistakes in the future. They don’t over-analyze them or dwell on them. Apply the same attitude. Don’t beat yourself up over every little mistake, doing that is a sure way to keep your confidence really low.
- 5.) No matter what your current level of self-confidence is, start building it up by being kind to yourself and appreciating yourself. If you manage to take this first but very important step, the rest will follow more naturally and without too much effort.



What Determines Your Level of Self-Esteem?

Each of us has a certain image of ourselves that we would like to achieve. It is the way we want to look, the things we want to have, the way we want to live and behave. We can call it our “ideal-self”. This state is what we refer to when we dream about a type of person we would like to become. Often this refers to our idols that we hold in high respect and would like to emulate.

Then there is the reality and how we really see ourselves, our “self-image”. Usually, our self-image is a far cry from our ideal-self. When we talk about our self-image we see that person who really doesn't impress us, whether this is with regard to looks, behavior or level of success.

The difference between your ideal-self, (that is the way you would like to be or act) and your actual self-image (that is the way you actually view yourself at the moment) determines the level of your self-esteem. Needless to say, the bigger the difference between these two levels, the lower your self-esteem.

How to close the gap? There is only one word for it: like. Start liking yourself more. To start liking yourself more, some work needs to be done. Start by comparing your ideal-image and your actual self-image and pick the areas in which you know you can develop. Decide sincerely and with not too much criticism: which part of your personality would you like to change to get closer to your ideal-self? Would you like to be a more kind type of person? Decide to put forward at least one act of kindness every day. Practice the same if you would like to be braver, more cheerful or decisive. Start liking yourself for every attempt you make and keep going.

The truth is, if you hold a certain ideal of yourself in your mind, you already have all the tools you need to become that person (even though you might not know it). Now you only need to find them and use them. Your growing self-esteem will be your reward for all your hard work.



Your Self-Esteem is a Prerequisite for Your Success

The majority of people truly want to be successful in life. They are even prepared to work hard, study, network, and socialize; whatever it takes to become successful. But at the core of all success, and how easy or difficult it is to achieve, is what we think of ourselves.

Our self-esteem is the reflection of how much we value ourselves and as such it is a prerequisite for our success. How so? Let me use some very practical examples here.

Let's say you have saved some money and bought yourself a really expensive piece of furniture. Wouldn't you look after that particular piece with more care than something you just got at the garage sale for a few bucks? You most probably would. In museums, the most precious pieces are kept in special covers, some of them are even kept in a very specific temperature to assure the high value of the art is maintained and highlighted to the world.

Now, let's have a look at us, human beings. We are also very precious, aren't we? Our body is such a complex and delicate mechanism, so is our brain and everything else about us. So why did so many of us develop that nasty habit of not attaching any value to ourselves? If we don't believe we are worthy of success, then indeed success will elude us, no matter how much or long we spend pursuing it.

Try and put a value on yourself. How much would it be? Describe your value whichever way you want: as a picture, feeling, number, miracle, movie scene, whatever comes to mind. Then start treating yourself as you would treat anybody /anything else with the same value. Keep your value in mind when going for an interview, wanting to change your career, having a tough conversation with your boss or in any other situation that puts your self-esteem to the test.

The way you value yourself will reflect on your self-esteem. Your self-esteem will pave the way to your success. The more valuable you feel, the faster you will achieve success. Yes, it is really that simple. So don't waste time, go ahead and do it.



3 Phases for Getting Your Confidence Back

If you are like many other people and suffer from a lack of self-confidence, you will probably relate to the words below. Read carefully, as you might also discover how to quickly claim your confidence back! You may not realize it but sometimes by you taking zero action due to a lack of self-confidence, you are creating space for others, maybe less smart or knowledgeable but more confident! If you want to stop doing that, read on – this might be just the right stuff for you.

In the first phase of your self-confidence development (you might be in it right now) you voluntarily give away your personal power to other people. How? You allow them to make decisions on your behalf, because you don't trust your judgment. You do stuff you don't believe in but you know will make you "look good" and be "approved of". You take the opinions of others as 100% correct and consider yours just wrong.

It is very possible that at a certain point you realize all of the above and say to yourself: enough is enough; I will stand up for myself. And you do. You do it with gusto and enthusiasm and start behaving as if you were always right. You start insisting on having the first choice, talking only about yourself and basically making sure that you are heard, seen and even felt! Yes, you will drain people with your requests and self-righteous attitude! Maybe this is an extreme description but I am sure you know some people in your surroundings who are like that! Now, are they more confident than people still hanging onto phase one? Absolutely not, they just use a different disguise for a very low self-esteem.

So what is the right way to be confident in a natural way? It is simple, really. In each and every situation use your heart. Your heart will tell you if you are giving away too much of yourself or if you are making too much of yourself. Your heart will indicate when is the time to push for your rights and when is the time to stop. Your heart will navigate you through the motions of keeping a balance between giving and taking. After all, when you are happy, you feel it in your heart, right? If your sense of self is being compromised, your happiness is amiss.

Therefore, when in doubt, have a little heart-to-heart with yourself; afterwards you will know exactly what to do and how to behave.



3 Simple Ways for Boosting Your Self-Confidence

People who struggle with their self-confidence often have difficulties seeing themselves or their lives in a positive light. And yet, with just a little bit of directed effort, they can start seeing things differently quite easily.

It is important to realize that the better you perceive yourself, the better you will perform in all areas of your life – and thus your life will improve. One of the easiest ways to be nicer to yourself is to treat yourself the same way you would treat your best friend. Isn't it true that when your best friend is down, you would do anything to cheer him/her up? Perhaps you would give a hug, offer words of support, or hold a hand. I doubt you would start by scolding him/her, continue by calling him/her names and finish off by concluding how hopeless his/her life is! And yet, when it comes to you, you do it happily every single time when you make a mistake or find yourself in a difficult situation. Next time, give yourself an inner hug and cheer yourself up just as you would your best friend. After all, having a best friend in yourself is the easiest way to give your confidence that oh-so-necessary boost.

Another good way to build your self-confidence is to stop taking things personally. From my experience, people who struggle with their self-esteem are masters in taking things personally. The other colleague got a promotion over me? The boss doesn't like me, I am such a loser. However, there is another way of looking at such an event. Did anybody else get promoted? Don't take it personally. Instead, make it your goal to find out what makes the other person so brilliant and improve those competencies that you might be missing for the time being. If you have plenty of other colleagues who will take the situation personally, sulk and do nothing, while you take positive action instead, guess who will be closer to that promotion next time?

The last option really combines the previous two. If you choose to look for a lesson and an opportunity in each and every situation, you will always come out of those situations as a winner. If you observe any successful people around you, you will see that this is exactly what they do. No setback is bad enough not to be turned into an opportunity.

Even if your self-confidence is not exactly soaring high, by applying these 3 simple principles, you will feel your life, subtly but surely, start changing for the better.



Self-Acceptance as a Stepping Stone to Building Your Self-Confidence

The majority of my clients who struggle with self-confidence have difficulties with their self-acceptance too.

It is the nature of we human beings to look at ourselves with depreciating eyes, rather than appreciate ourselves. And yet, none of us is superior or inferior to other people; all we need to do is understand the importance of self-acceptance and more importantly, to learn how to implement it in our lives.

To begin with, accept that it is OK to have the shortcomings you have. After all, all of us have some weaknesses; we are not perfect. Then after the initial acceptance you should also be clear about what you would like to change about some of your characteristics and how to go about it. Don't you think the statement "I am really scared of water and I wish I were not. I am going to seek some help for this issue" is much stronger than the statement "I am just a pathetic loser for being scared of water".

When you accept your weakness and at the same time attach a possible solution, goal or a plan to it, you go from a passive person who feels sorry for himself/herself to a person who is dealing with his/her issues in a positive and problem-solving way. Not only is such a process very empowering, it also puts you in an "I have a plan to follow" mode which takes away the pressure of concentrating on the parts of yourself you don't like that much.

Another good tip on how to practice self-acceptance is to understand how certain weaknesses can turn into an advantage under completely different circumstances. For example, your fear of water would not be very funny when going for a rafting trip with a group of friends. Yet it can be very useful when a volunteer is needed to stay ashore and do some other useful activities during the trip.

The whole trick is to understand that all of us have some strength and some weaknesses and as long as we accept them and try to do something about them, we have achieved much more than those who pretend they don't have any (even though it is blatantly clear that they do)!

If you are able to take these first steps towards your acceptance, the raise in your self-confidence will follow – that is guaranteed!



Is Your Self-Confidence Really as Low as You Think?

If you ask any coach what is the one issue their clients have in common, it would be a lack of self-esteem and confidence. Sometimes it is obvious, other times people train themselves to hide it well but at some level almost everyone experiences the self-doubt which can be so de-motivating.

If you are one of those people, read further, things might not be as bad as they seem.

Lately, I have discovered something interesting. When working with a client who suffers from low self-confidence, we don't primarily focus on building the confidence. Rather, we look at other areas of the clients' life and look for proof of their strengths and achievements. These reminders then serve as "building blocks" towards the evolvment of their self-esteem.

And here comes the interesting part: When I listen to what my clients are capable of, what they have been through, how they have reacted under some very stressful circumstances, I am often left wondering. How is it possible that this person still believes he/she is lacking self-confidence?

One of my clients boldly asked for a pay rise. Another initiated a dramatic career change without having any guarantees of future success or even income. Another one divorced her husband and boldly embarked on a single life with three little children. Yet, all of those clients claimed lack of self-confidence as their main problem!

Do you wonder why? The way I see it is the following. We are all surrounded by individuals who are loud, assertive, bold and overall come across as "bouncing heaps" of self-confidence. When comparing themselves with these individuals, those who are quieter, calmer and more reflective types feel that their self-confidence is missing.

What many people don't understand is that self-confidence comes in many forms and shapes. Often people who are the loudest are missing it the most! On the contrary, those who make their decisions, stick to them and carry them through are those who display more self-confidence and strength.

Now you go ahead and make your honest assessment. Is your self-confidence really as low as you thought?



The Connection between a Lack of Self-esteem and Motivation

One of the main factors that help us to succeed is our persistence to keep going in spite of the obstacles we encounter. However, the ability to persist and have faith in the final outcome is very difficult when the individual suffers from a lack of self-esteem.

Those who don't believe in themselves tend to take even a minor setback as proof that they failed because that is "just the way they are". Even the smallest detail that doesn't go their way serves as further evidence of something that they already knew, which was "I can never get it right and that is just the way it is". At that point (and it can be right at the beginning of their journey towards achieving a goal or a desire) they give up, never achieve the final outcome – which then consequently pushes their self-esteem down ... and thus the vicious circle begins.

There is a way out of this circle, though. Those individuals who were lucky enough to try coaching would probably willingly confirm that coaching is a great way of pointing out the reality of their life, rather than their own perception of it.

I used to have a client who was on the verge of being fired (he was literally on his last warning), only to be promoted big-time just a year later. The company didn't do anything to support his self-esteem, thus his motivation went down hill very fast. Once he understood his own value and his confidence increased, so did his motivation and his work ethics.

For those who, for whatever reason, would not consider coaching, there is a simple exercise you can do. Whenever you feel de-motivated, check first whether it is your lack of self-esteem that is in your way or a different reason. If you establish that it is your self-esteem, just look back at your day, or week, or month and notice all the occasions when you acted in a confident way, when you were praised and appreciated, respected and valued. Build on those moments, they will bring your motivation back and you will be free to continue your wonderful journey towards your desired future outcomes.



Your Self-Development



Self-Honesty as The Number One Emotion

“The external events have only as much power over you as you allow them to have.” Have you heard this sentence before? Did you ever consider its meaning and its impact on your life? If not, let me explain my take on it.

Here is the thing. Most of us are, deep inside, good human beings or at least we are trying to be! In order to be true to our “nice selves”, we are prepared to accommodate other people even if it doesn’t suit us. We are ready to compromise and suffer in the process. We are willing to lower our expectations and go out of our way to show how helpful we can be.

The question is, how do you feel while performing all those acts of philanthropy and altruism? Isn’t it true that doing stuff we don’t really feel like doing wears us down, makes us tired and often even resentful and angry?

The reason for all of those emotions is our inability or unwillingness to tune-in to our true feelings, accept them and carry through with them.

Is your biggest desire to be a stay-at-home mum but you have been having a fantastic career, making your family proud, so off you go after a couple of weeks with the baby, back to the rat race it is! Have you been seriously considering changing your career because it doesn’t bring you joy; only to be reminded that you are really good at it and wouldn’t it be a shame to let it all go? Wouldn’t your child rather play than being dragged from one after-school activity to another one and being reminded in the process that it is indeed good for him/her? Where are the emotions of those involved, though?

Being honest about your emotions, meaning how you feel about situations you find yourself in, is the single most important thing you can do if you want to improve your life. It is applicable right away and doesn’t cost a penny. It is not easy but with the understanding of its importance and a bit of patience and consistency, it is achievable for everybody.



Are you Having Enough Fun?

There is an exercise, which I use as part of my coaching process, called the “Wheel of Life”. During it, the clients have to rate their current level of health, finances, career, physical environment, personal development, relationships, and fun and recreation.

It is always interesting to see how people breeze through the other sections, only to pause when they reach the part of fun and recreation. This is usually followed by a question: “What do you mean by that?”

Isn't it so telling that this part needs to be actually explained? The truth is, many people don't have room in their lives for fun and recreation – or so they claim. And yet if they took a step in the right direction and injected just a bit of fun (to begin with) into their lives, they would be surprised at the positive impact this would have. It is a magical circle: more fun is followed by feeling more relaxed, which is followed by good things happening, which in itself means more fun...and so the circle continues.

If you are familiar with the Law of Attraction, you probably know that the most important thing you can do for yourself to attract what you want into your life is to heighten your vibrations. This is exactly where the fun part comes into play. When you are having fun, you are raising your vibrations without even knowing it, thus your desired outcome comes to you more easily.

Having said that, most people still struggle with the idea of fun (I used to be one of them, I admit). There is a certain level of guilt attached to it, and then there is the stigma of “fun is a luxury I can't have” or a limiting belief that in order to have fun we need to have money.

Sure, the idea of fun is different for everyone but with a bit of honest thinking I am sure anybody can come up with things that are fun, and that don't require too much time or money. If you make a decision to do something fun every day, be more spontaneous and be more relaxed, it will become a natural part of your day and, eventually, life. And if it all seems to be a bit unrealistic to you, try it and see for yourself. After all, I am not asking you to climb Mount Everest, I am only asking you to smile, laugh and relax more in your daily life.



A Simple Process for Dealing with Criticism

None of us likes to be criticized but, if handled properly, criticism can actually be very helpful.

The trouble is, when somebody criticizes us, it immediately triggers a negative emotional reaction. Most of the time, the reaction is so strong that we don't even hear or properly understand what is being said to us. All we know is that someone is being nasty to us and we need to get upset, because this is the only way to cope, right? Wrong.

Consider this: what if the person is "criticizing" you because he or she is genuinely trying to help you? What if the points such a person is making are actually very valid? Sometimes, even we feel that we are not behaving the way we usually do or the way we would like to behave. Isn't then the "criticism" just a validation of our own feelings?

Therefore, when facing somebody who has just delivered a "critical" talk to us, you can do the following.

Let the comment sink in before you react. You can count to 5 or whichever method works for you. Then immediately make sure that the communication doesn't end there and then. Ask for clarification. Ask for specific examples of the behavior that was being criticized. Try to stay open to what the other person has to say. As mentioned earlier, he/she might actually have a valid point. It is also very possible that the whole episode was a miscommunication and a simple explanation might change the view of the other person completely.

While you keep the communication going, you will see that your emotions become more stable and that you are no longer in the same "upset" state you were in at the beginning of the conversation.

This simple process can have 2 outcomes. If there was a misunderstanding, by communicating openly you manage to clear that up and you can both move on. If, however, the cause of the criticism is established as valid, you can close the conversation by informing the other person that you will think about their comment and get back to them about it later.

By now you should be calm enough to be able to reflect upon the whole situation with an objectivity that would have been missing had you exposed your emotions immediately after being criticized.



How to Improve Your Assertiveness in a Few Easy Steps

Dealing with various life situations in a more assertive way is easier than you might think – if you follow a few easy steps.

Obvious as it may seem, a good place to begin is to get the full attention of the person you are addressing. If the person isn't paying attention to you fully, you can't deliver your point the way you would like to and that can undermine your further dealings with that person.

When you talk to a particular person about your feelings on a certain situation, express yourself honestly and describe the behavior that caused your feelings with precision and without exaggerating. You don't want to come across as overly emotional or hysterical; you might not be taken seriously. When you talk about your feelings and the reasons for them genuinely and calmly, you will get the attention you are asking for.

Next step would be to invite the other person to respond (e.g. "What do you think about it?" "How do you view it?"). Engage him/her in the conversation, and if you agree with the other person's view, say so. If you don't agree, say so too.

In order to have some sort of conclusion/closure, you need to state very clearly how you would like the behavior of that person to change towards you in the future. If you can reach an agreement on that, perfect, you have achieved a positive turnaround in a situation that was bothering you and that is a great achievement.

If, however, the other person refuses to agree, you can leave the whole discussion at the point when you make yourself clear how you will behave in similar situations in the future, so that your behavior doesn't come as a surprise. By doing so you have still managed to send a very strong and clear signal and at the same time you are giving the other person a chance to react later, when the same or similar situation occurs again.

However, if after more repetitions of the same conflict and, even after you have applied the new behavior that suits you better, you still don't see any change in other person's behavior, you should consider, if at all possible, not being involved with this person. For building a successful relationship, your own assertiveness is not enough – it is always a two-way road.



3 Main Reasons Your Persistence Fails

As I mentioned in my previous articles connected to motivation, persistence is one of the tools which helps us to achieve our goals or desires. Being persistent is generally not easy and there are many reasons why people fail in the pursuit of their desire. For the purpose of this article, I will mention the 3 main reasons.

1.) You are not prepared to give up your immediate pleasures in order to follow your long-term plans.

Keeping the long-term vision attractive and lively when the route towards it might take months or even years is extremely difficult. This is one of the reasons why so many people who are on a diet or involved in any form of addiction, fail. The final goal is so far ahead that it seems impossible to deal with all the restrictions connected to it for such a long time. The same goes for long-term saving plans, studies, careers etc.

Here the recommendation is to set your goals realistically and split each one into as small chunks as needed to feel the sense of achievement and thus stick to it for longer.

2.) You don't believe in yourself and your ability to achieve your goals.

There is a strong connection between your level of self-esteem and ability to keep going towards your goals over a long-term period. Many people (often based on their past experience) don't believe they are capable of pursuing their plans and thus when they give up, it doesn't surprise them; it only confirms what they had expected anyway.

If this is your situation, building your self-esteem would be the number-one goal, before you start spending energy on other goals and give up on them one by one. Working with a great coach, for example, is a wonderful way how to build your self-esteem and learn more about yourself in the process.

3.) You don't see the progress you were hoping for, so you lose faith in the process and decide to quit.

In any pursuit of a long-term goal, there comes a time when all our efforts seem to get us nowhere, when the progress we expected is clearly not there. These are exactly the moments when only the strongest and most determined persevere. Nothing is more demoralizing than continuing to work towards something when we can't see tangible results.

In this situation, remind yourself why that particular goal is so important to you and why you want it so much. At the same time, remind yourself how much you have achieved already. Constant visualization of your final outcome can also give you that last final push needed to stick to your plan and achieve what you intended.



Remembering Your Own Accountability

What I love about the coaching process is the fact that the client holds the responsibility for his/her own decisions and actions. Yes, he is being supported, assisted, possibly even sent through a few brain storming sessions but at the end of the day ...he is the one who comes with his own outcome. He is the one being held accountable for it.

People who have a coach are being reminded about the fact that they are the only ones responsible for their lives on a regular basis....but what about the rest of the population? What about those who have not decided to seek coaching or are not in a position to go through with it?

Presumably, deep inside we all know about personal accountability or we have heard it somewhere along the way. Why is it then that we tend to forget and loose ourselves in endless complaining, criticising, sulking, moaning and groaning? The answer is simple: because it is easier. It takes 5 seconds to utter a complaint about the leaking toilet; it takes 30 minutes to organize somebody to fix it. It takes one coffee break to “unload” about the boredom of your job; it might potentially take months to find another one.

And so, day after day and month after month we go around in the same circles of realization that something in our lives is very wrong and at the same time we accept our impotence of not doing anything about it.

And while you are doing your circles, the solution is so blatantly simple. Stop before you utter another complaint. Accept your responsibility. Then take an action and do something about it. Simple, really. 3 steps and I make them easy to remember: Ready (to complain), Steady (to realize what you are about to do, stop yourself and remind yourself of who is in charge) and Go (towards the action). Yes and one more for the road: Don't look back, only ahead.



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The Easiest Way to Get Things Done

I recently met a potential new client. He was a young man, wondering why his life was going nowhere, and wanted some help to “sort himself out”. Needless to say, this was an ideal situation for me. As a coach, I like challenges – the bigger, the better – and the situation for that particular man certainly posed one of those.

What happened next should not have surprised me, I guess. After the confirmation of his interest in working with me, the starting date has since never been established and still today I am waiting to hear from him... Why? Somewhere along the line he probably started thinking whether this was the right step for him to take and decided to wait and try this a bit later...

This is not the best way to get things done. When we want things done, we just have to do them; it's as simple as that. If applying for a certain job feels right, we should go ahead and apply. Even if the outcome is not positive, we will know we tried. The same goes for asking someone for a date, promotion, relocation, higher salary, more respect...

Thinking too much and waiting too much might put us off our initially-desired direction forever. If you hesitate for too long, other candidates come along and get the job. You can blame it on their luck; I would blame it on your procrastination.

Another important fact to take into consideration is that your sudden impulses or inspirations come from your intuition. Your intuition is usually right, therefore it is best to listen to it and act on it right away.

If the concept of feeling a need for a certain taking-action approach resonates with you, go ahead and try it next time when you hear your intuition calling. I can guarantee you: the outcome will not disappoint you.



3 Reasons for Learning to Say “No”

Most of us have been raised to be proper and polite; to obey and to agree. No wonder it is so hard for us to be able to say “no”. I have had so many client situations when saying “no” has become an exercise or assignment for as long as it was required – I can assure you that letting go of the habit of always saying “yes”, whether they felt like it or not, was not easy at all!

Yet the ability to say “no” is very important in our lives. Why? Firstly, we know when we say “yes” sometimes it’s only because we think we should. Everything in our body screams “no” but we still go ahead with “yes”. As a result, we feel the discomfort, sometimes pain, other times sadness or frustration. In any case, our feelings are not pleasant. Acting against our feelings, as opposed to in accordance with them, over a long time might have implications not only on our happiness but eventually on our health – and that is a serious prospect.

Secondly, it is necessary to realize that by saying “yes” to something, you are saying “no” to something else. For example, by saying “yes” to a job you didn’t want, you are saying “no” to pursuing your dream or at least trying for a job that you really, really want. If you are saying “yes” to a salary that you consider too low, you are closing the door for further negotiation and even the possibility of trying to get paid more.

Try this exercise in the future. Whenever you are about to say “yes”, when in reality you want to say “no”, look ahead and understand what you are losing by saying “yes” just because it seems easier at the time.

Thirdly, it is really difficult to follow your chosen direction in life if along the way you are not prepared to fight for it. And yes, fighting sometimes means saying “no” on a repeated basis, until the people around you understand that you are going for it and you are doing it your way. I can promise you, once they have understood that you are serious, they will let you be and the number of situations when your “no” would be required, will diminish dramatically.



The Reason for Raising your Expectations

Recently, I came across a quote from Abraham-Hicks which made me smile, because it was so true. It went like this: “It is not more difficult to create a castle than a button. Most of you have more buttons than castles, however, because they are easier to expect.”

Indeed, why is it that we stop believing at some point, that we can be more, do more and have more? When does that moment occur when we stop dreaming and settle for what is?

It happens to different people at different times and I guess it might have to do with the fact that there are certain responsibilities of life that we just have to deal with and, seemingly, there is no time left for more.

This is a big misconception, though. “Wanting” more doesn’t need to cost anything, not even your time. “Wanting” runs on an emotional level and all you have to do is remember that emotion and keep it in your thoughts as much as possible. It does not mean your “wants” will turn into reality immediately. But by applying the patience, belief and total surrender that your “wants” will come through, they eventually will.

You are probably thinking now, what a load of cheap motivational talk. But honestly, when was the last time you sincerely and without any internal limitations sat down and wrote a list of all the things/people/situations you really, truly, want in your life? When did you lift the heaviness of all the complaints and responsibilities and allowed yourself to daydream?

Well, if you didn’t try it, how do you know it doesn’t work? You will only see if you try. After all, it can’t be so hard to allow yourself to want what you have always wanted and bring it back to your life in your thoughts. When you add a real expectation that things WILL happen for you, you are on the right path. Enjoy!



The Power of Your Intentions

Never underestimate the power of your intentions. I have discovered it only recently and I sincerely regret all those years that this simple knowledge has been passing me by.

Why is it so important? Let's face it, most people don't remind themselves often enough what it is they truly want in their life and what is their desired direction. When you set your intention on something that you truly desire, not only does it serve as a powerful reminder of your wishes, it also brings the fulfillment of that desire closer and faster than ever. You might as well consider it done, it is so powerful.

What needs to be understood though is that setting your intention is not just "saying a sentence" or "stating your desire". It is like inserting a plug into an outlet. Without electricity in the house, the moment of "inserting" means nothing.

When setting your intentions, you need to enhance that motion with adding your feelings for that particular desire into the picture. Your feelings serve as the electricity from the example above. They amplify everything. They make it work. They make it happen.

The process is quite simple. Be clear about your desire, as clear possible. Get yourself into the strong emotional state about achieving that desire. That should not be difficult, since it is your desire, you surely feel good about it already! If you have difficulties, you can just close your eyes and imagine how you would feel once that desire has manifested. Then set your intention on the final outcome and let go. For the rest, all you have to do is believe that the desired outcome is about to manifest.

This process is fun and you can do it with the smallest stuff; in fact, starting with the smallest stuff is highly recommended. You are building your "intentions muscle" after all, and that takes time. Remember, though, just like the muscle, practice and repetition bring the results. Work it out. And, by the way, happy manifesting.



Get Used to a New Definition of Selfishness

None of us likes it to be called selfish. In fact, selfishness has got a pretty bad name. In my view, it's all about the definition.

Many people who are famous and who now donate millions to places and cases that need it have often been “selfish” in their lives. How? By playing by their rules, by following their own ideas, by concentrating on their own passions and interests. Yes, those who did exactly **WHAT** they wanted and **WHEN** they wanted and **HOW** they wanted have become successful and rich – and as a result, extremely **GIVING**.

I am not suggesting that you put everybody else in your life aside and ruthlessly pursue your every whim. I am suggesting that you turn the whole concept of being selfish around and look at it from a different perspective.

If your needs and desires get satisfied first, won't it be easier to pay attention to those around you when they need it? If you feel happy and fulfilled inside, doesn't that feeling propel you towards being kinder to those around you?

There were times in my life when I volunteered at my children's school at each and every occasion. I thought I was doing it “for them”. Yet I was running my own business at the same time. To manage it all and not to be “selfish”, I compensated by working at night. As a result, I was tired, resentful towards the school and still behind at my work. Then I decided to put myself and my work first and spend the time with my children differently. I dropped all the activities at school, worked instead and spent real quality time with my children when they were at home. Yes, I still hear occasional grumbles about other mums participating more but it doesn't bother me, because I know that when and where I decide to donate my time, I will do it with my whole heart.

Whenever you find yourself in a situation where you do stuff for others because you feel you should, do an honest re-evaluation and back-track. Put yourself first, do what you feel like doing and then, when you are in a happy and satisfied state of mind, do what you believe would help others. By being “selfish” you only follow your desire to meet your needs and that is the best compass you have ever been given.



Are Your Expectations Positive Enough?

The other day, my son was preparing for his science test. When I casually asked him what he thought he would get in his test, his answer stunned me. He said: “A, of course, why would I expect anything else?” I was impressed by his self-confidence – and at the same time something occurred to me.

Didn't we all used to be like that when we were kids? Didn't we also expect only “good things” to happen to us? When and where did we lose that belief? And isn't it just a great pity we allowed that to happen?

I understand that our life experiences showed us otherwise, but have you noticed that some people still “believe in better outcomes” and are “forever optimistic”? Have you also noticed how their lives seem to flow more naturally and smoothly? Could there be a connection between expecting better outcomes and better outcomes actually happening?

If you try to copy those people and be happy and “positively expectant” just for the day, you will see how much better you feel and how much good stuff you start noticing. For when you are in that “happy-go-lucky” space, anything goes. And everything is all right. You can manage. It will work out for the best. Try it once and compare your feelings at the end of such a day. It is very possible you will not want to return to your old ways.

And by the way, my son got an A+ in his science test. I am going to ask him about his “attraction tricks”. Don't worry – I will share them with you some other time.



Step Into Your Own Powerful Self

It never ceases to amaze me how people like to rely on other people for help, support or advice. Worse still – how people tend to blame others for their problems and current circumstances.

In reality, the solutions could not be easier. We just have to realize that we are our own powerhouse. All we have to do is step into it and use the power that is there in our disposal and has always been.

I watched some time ago the speech Oprah Winfrey gave when she announced that her current TV season will be her last. She was holding it together very well until a certain moment, when emotions took over and she needed to pause and compose herself before she continued. In that pause, there was everything. In that pause I saw a powerful woman, who made a decision not to cry, because she knew she would probably never stop and that would have spoiled the moment. Having said that, how many of us would crumble under the pressure? How many of us would allow factors other than our own decisions to take over? Probably many of us.

By stepping into our own powerhouse we take the power for our decisions and our behavior into our own hands and deal with life situations from that starting point. If things don't work out, we are responsible and can try a different way. If things go brilliantly, hey, we take that responsibility and pride, too!

When facing a tough decision or a difficult situation, just remind yourself that you are the one who holds the power. If the analogy with a powerhouse helps, use it. Imagine yourself stepping into a powerhouse called your inner self, switch on all the lights and off you go. The lights will show you the way and the walls of the house will protect you. You are invincible.



Can Honesty be Your Cure?

I have a friend who recently started complaining about persistent insomnia. He also persistently believed it was caused by weather changes, heavy food, uncomfortable pillows, etc. Then I asked him, just for fun, to put down all the things that were currently not working in his life or that bothered him on some level. He did the list, brought it to me – and oh boy, was it long!

He walked around with this long list in his head, not knowing it was so long and not realizing how much certain points on the list frustrated him – until his body decided to take over and send a message that something was very, very wrong. Needless to say, just making the list has helped my friend gain more clarity. And by starting to tackle one issue after another (always starting with the smallest and easily fixable issues first) he has regained his restful nights.

The lesson here is not about lists and sleepless nights. The issue here is honesty and how much we are using it when evaluating or thinking about our lives. How many excuses do you use to hide the obvious facts? How many lies do you feed yourself on a daily basis? How often are your feelings spotted on but you decide to listen to your “brain voice” instead?

By incorporating honesty into your daily actions towards yourself, you will gain many valuable insights. Not only about who you are but about who you really want to be. If you want to be happy, positive, full of energy (and have a good night’s sleep!), start asking some relevant questions and answering them honestly. This would be a great beginning, followed by, hopefully, some even more relevant action.



How Do You Make Your Decisions?

Making decisions is part of our daily life and for many it can be a cumbersome task. I know some people who go around asking half the world what they think about the decision they are about to make. Imagine if the opinions of such a huge group vary (and they often do!) – what then? Then there are those who do their research quietly. They read the information, compare the facts, make a shortlist of possible outcomes and then finally make their decision. By themselves, yes, but my goodness the time it took!

And then there is the rest, who make their decisions spontaneously – and believe it or not they actually have fun in the process!

What is the difference here?

When making our decisions, we can either rely on the external factors – the facts, the numbers, the news, the experience and opinions of other people – or we can listen to our own internal guidance and follow what we feel like and what works for us.

Guess what? Who knows you and your situation and needs the best? You do! Who knows (even if very, very deep inside) the right answer? You do! Who knows what feels right and what feels wrong? Yes, you do.

It is the nature of human beings to underestimate our own opinion and guidance. We tend to believe that others know more and that if we listen and follow, we will be fine.

While that might be true in some cases, if you eliminate that external stimuli, calm your mind down and listen to your inner guidance, it will give you the right answer – every time; hands down; without any mistake.

Try it with “small stuff” and when you feel you can trust that inner voice, go for the “big stuff”. You will not be disappointed.



What is the True Reason for your Actions?

If you are one of those people who has the urge to say “yes” to everything, this is a must-read article for you.

I come across this “yes”-impulse in my clients often – especially female clients; the men don’t seem to suffer from this syndrome as much! This “yes”-impulse makes clients relentlessly volunteer for everything that requires volunteering; continuously care for their kids’ pets; never fail to provide a shoulder for friends to cry on – and only occasionally admit that they feel “overwhelmed”. And is there any wonder, these clients feel overwhelmed? All their precious time is spent on others; there no time left to think about their own lives, thoughts, feelings or wants.

Saying “yes” to any and every request often has hidden reasons. For example, some people over-volunteer because of a desperate need to be appreciated, or because of a need to feel important, or simply because of a need to be so busy that there is no time to focus on the reality of their life.

If you are constantly striving to please everybody else, all the time, and are beginning to get tired of doing so, try the following simple exercise. Every time you are asked to do something, ask yourself before replying: Do I really want to do this? Or do I want to do it because I think I should?

There is a big difference between “wanting” to do something and thinking we “should” do it. There will always be responsibilities, things that we “have” to do. But apart from these core tasks, try to always differentiate between “want” and “should” – this will be the fastest indicator of the real reason for your future decision making.

If possible, from now on, try to commit only to those activities that you really want to do. Your life will be much easier and you will have more fun too!



Are you hiding behind your stress?

When I talk to clients who are stressed, I have noticed they have one thing in common. Actually, they have more things in common but one stands out for me.

They all seem to be running around, doing this, doing that and if they have a spare minute, they decide to re-arrange the furniture or straighten up the books on the shelves, just to do “something”.

At the same time, they claim, they are tired. They have no time just to sit and relax, because if they did, they would earn less money and the competition would snatch their niche, and so on and so on. When asked if that is an ideal life for them they say no but no other life is possible, period. And then they start talking about travelling to new places and taking walks by the ocean and relaxing with a book, while having this dreaming look in their eyes as if those activities were only allowed for royalty.

The trouble comes, when I share my piece of honesty with them, pointing out that they are clearly running away and hiding from something, most probably from themselves.

In all fairness, such is the nature of many of us. Running in circles, complaining all the same, describing how life would be outside the circle and then sadly concluding that we don't have enough courage to break free. Why is that so? What can be so difficult?

The truth is, it is often easier to make millions than to sit down and admit that we are not happy with our lives. It is easier to train for a marathon than resign from a job that bores us but represents stability. It is easier to complain than break patterns and habits and possibly get a bit shaken in the process.

Yet the truth eventually catches up with us, should it be in the form of sickness, getting divorced, being fired, the forms are endless. When you think about it, isn't it just easier to sit down, do an honest and thorough evaluation of your life right now and start implementing changes bit by bit?

Look at it this way. When the action comes from you, it is much more honorable and easier than when somebody has to do it for you. Don't you agree?



Learn to Shift Your Perception

Everything in life is about perception, meaning, things can be different if we look at them differently.

Keeping this information on top of your mind can be extremely helpful whenever you find yourself in a situation that is pulling you down instead of keeping you up or when your feelings of ease and happiness are long forgotten and you can't imagine you will ever find them again.

All those feelings of disconnection, loss of direction and not having enough energy to keep us going can be easily changed by a simple shift in our perception.

Let's say you have been trying for some time to get promoted. You feel you work hard; you have all the competencies, qualifications, drive, etc. Yet the promotion is not happening. Over time your perception of the whole situation might begin to slide towards self-doubt, de-motivation and thinking that your Company or your boss will never recognize you and you are just wasting time working for them.

In a situation like this it is hard to remain positive and believe in a better outcome. Here is where a shift in perception can help. Firstly, you can shift your perception towards experience and ask yourself questions such as "What am I learning here?" One of the answers can be: "By having been in this situation for such a long time, I have developed patience, I have come up with new ways to motivate myself, I have improved my competencies". Doesn't that sound more powerful?

Another shift in perception might be towards honesty and you might ask questions such as: "Do I really want this promotion or am I after it just because everybody tells me I should?" By giving yourself an honest answer you might realize that all that time you spent waiting was not lost, because you actually would be happier in another job altogether.

No matter what our reality is, there is always a lesson to be learned. Realizing that is already a first step to shifting your perception the right way.



The Power of Decision

With many things in life, even with our goals, it goes like this: We want them, we think about them, we even go as far as making them part of our New Year's resolutions or a business plan. Then we continue to look at them, think about them, and plan them ...but hardly making it beyond these steps. Why does this happen?

Sometimes we are afraid of failure. Other times we decide to prioritize different goals instead (while still being afraid of failure). Yet another reason, one of my favorites, "life gets in our way". Do you recognize these situations?

Then at the end of the year or whatever planning period you choose, we realize we did nothing about that particular goal, even though it seemed important and we felt strongly about it in the beginning.

Next time, when dealing with this goal or any other goal, take a different approach. Make a decision. If you indeed what to pursue the given goal and become successful in doing so, simply make a decision to deal with that goal once and for all. If needed, say it out loud. Put it in your diary. Prepare a very detailed 'action plan" and start taking action right away. Re-visit your progress every day. Do whatever you deem necessary to keep that goal on top of your mind.

When you approach things with the power of decision, your attitude gets more serious, as if by magic. It is almost as if part of yourself (the more committed one) is telling the other part of you (the more reluctant one): "OK, I am taking over here and we are going to do it my way".

Making a decision seems like such an obvious choice, yet we forget about it way too often. Here is your reminder: make a decision about making a decision and stand by it. Then you will be just fine.



The Signs of a True Passion

These past couples of weeks have been really rainy in my country and the rain has been heavy and non-stop. The sort of weather that makes you want to stay inside, preferably snuggle in with a favorite book and forget about the world outside.

Apart from the weather, life goes on and I decided to continue with my usual routine and pay a visit to my local gym. Once I got there I talked to my fellow healthy living citizens about the fact that we are “the real deal” fitness goers, since we came no matter the rain outside. Meaning we left our heated houses to move by a heated car to spend an hour in a heated gym.

I felt pretty good about myself, until I drove home and as I was driving, I passed a man. A man who was dressed in his shorts, running shoes and a hooded top. This man was running outside, with a huge smile on his face and clearly oblivious to his surroundings, because he was doing something he had a passion for (it was very clear from his technique that he was an avid runner).

Needless to say, my own self-imposed bubble burst right away but this running man represented an important analogy for me.

I get so many questions from my clients about what direction they should take in their lives, saying they were not sure what their passion was anymore. Well, here is the answer. If you are prepared to engage in that particular activity no matter the outer circumstances, however wet, muddy and unpleasant they might be, then that activity represents your passion. When you don't need to look for excuses but you throw yourself into this activity full speed at any given opportunity, then you are following your passion. When you have a huge smile on your face, because you are enjoying yourself so much that you just can't stop, that's when you are dealing with your passion.

If you don't have such situations in your life, try and introduce some new ones and observe yourself. Your passion is waiting somewhere out there for you and just by officially beginning the “search”, congratulations, you are half way there.



Stepping Out of Your Comfort Zone Made Easy

Those of you, who have children, might be familiar with the classic story written by Dr. Seuss called “Green Eggs and Ham”. In it, one character consistently chases the other character, offering him to eat “green eggs and ham”. Needless to say, the poor chased guy is in no mood to try something that sounds so revolting...until the very end, when he succumbs to the pressure, tries a bite of a dreaded meal and...discovers a true delicacy!

In our family, we often use the phrase “green eggs and ham” when we want our children to try something new. Remembering the story, they often agree and as a result, have many more experiences than they would be willing to try otherwise.

Applying this metaphor to a real life, how brave are you to try some “green eggs and ham”? How ready are you to step out of your comfort zone and try something new? What is it that’s stopping you?

For most of the people it is the fear of the unknown and a potential failure that holds them back. However, try to look at it this way. You sure can re-call some situations in the past when you were reluctant about certain action or activity only to perform it later and realizing there was nothing to it? How many times have you hesitated to approach a certain person only to be surprised by their openness and kindness? How many times have you expected something to be difficult only to discover it actually quite easy for you?

What if the positive outcome is waiting for you at the end of this particular tunnel? After all, the chances are always 50-50. If you concentrate on the 50% that represent a success, to overcome the challenge will become easier. And if things don’t exactly work out the way you wanted, you can still give yourself a pat for trying.

It is much better than thinking and overanalyzing your particular challenge and procrastinating forever. After all, “green eggs and ham” can come in various forms and tastes and you don’t have to like them but you ought to try them.



The Forgotten Art of a Protest

A little while ago, we had a situation with our 7 year old daughter. For whatever reason she got in trouble, was told off and sent promptly to her room.

After about 5 minutes she emerged from her room, having a poster hung around her neck (clearly inspired by the “protest march” scene in Hairspray). The poster read: “I protest against people who don’t treat me nicely”.

While, of course, I found the whole situation highly amusing, it got me into thinking. How many of us have forgotten the simple “art of a protest”? In how many areas of our lives have we decided to settle for a compromise just “to have peace”? How many situations do we “put up with” instead of protest them and fight them? How often do we settle for “status quo” instead of igniting some positive and powerful action?

I understand that life is not about “going against the flow” all the time but standing up for what you believe , fighting for your dreams and protesting against what doesn’t belong to your life anymore is your right and your duty. You owe it to yourself, perhaps you have just forgotten?

Wake up and make yourself a poster. List on it everything you want to protest against. It might be just that first step you need to start you up.

And, just a friendly reminder. If a 7 year old can do it, so can you. Good luck.



Your Career



3 Main Reasons Holding You Back From Changing Your Career

So many people want to change their careers, yet only a small percentage of them actually manage to go through with the change. If you find yourself in the majority group, read on – you might discover what holds you back from making your desired changes and how you can deal with those inhibitions.

The biggest reason for not changing careers is that people claim they don't know what they would do instead. Is this really true? From my coaching experience, when people are in that “explore your dreams, anything is possible” mode, they are very certain about what job or career would bring them happiness. And yet, when they return to their reality, it all seems totally impossible again. So before you dismiss your dreams as farfetched, get a bit creative. Take your favorite new job idea and look at it from as many different perspectives as possible. Imagine that your life depends on getting that job! Ask yourself questions: do I know anybody at all who can give me some information about that job or get me to talk to someone who could? Is there any research I can do about that job? Are there any magazines about this specific industry I can read? Are there any classes I can attend? Get yourself “into that job” virtually, imagining you already have a job. Keep talking about it with anybody who will listen. And when finally, out of the blue comes an offer or an interview, be open to it – don't panic. It goes without saying that you would be prepared as well as possible for that interview, right? But that is out of the scope of this article.

Another reason holding you back is the opposite. People know what they want but they like too many things and don't know how to settle on one! If this is the case, consider a “portfolio career”. It is very normal these days to be involved in more activities than one, especially if you decide to have your own business. But even if you are an employee, you can start with something that brings you the biggest income and develop other activities on the side. If, over time, some of the other activities become more fun or profitable, you can switch your focus. Allowing yourself to be flexible is key here.

A third reason is when people claim they have no real interests and no particular career has a particular appeal but still, they would like a change. Those people need to dig a bit deeper to unfold their interest, because for sure they have some! What section of the newspaper do you read first? What sorts of movies do you like the most? What topics do you cover when talking to your friends? Sometimes it is necessary to re-visit your past. Is there anything in particular you used to love but buried over time under the pile of your everyday responsibilities? I can guarantee you that there is some interest, if not passion, hidden somewhere. You just need to allow yourself to be honest enough to reveal it to yourself and act on it.

Regardless of what your particular reason for not changing your career is, even if you want to, professional and well structured career coaching could be extremely helpful and beneficial to you.



An Important First Step When Changing Your Career

If you are considering a change in your career, to implement the following first step can be extremely valuable.

When implementing any change in life, it helps to start with a “clean slate”. Do the following exercise. For the purpose of this, put aside all your current activities, involvements and issues. Then ask yourself the following question: “If you could hypothetically start all over again, while at the same time using all the experience you have so far collected in your life, what would you do?” This is a very powerful question. Why?

We often get involved in situations and relationships that somewhere along the lines have stopped serving us well. This happens because we accept what we have without stopping and wondering if this is actually what we want. However, a change in your career will most probably have repercussions on many other areas of your life, therefore in order to be ready for the coming change, evaluating your current situation with as much honesty as possible becomes very important.

Now, as a next step, if you take time to think and for the purpose of this exercise allow yourself to “drop the luggage”, would you do things differently? If yes, how? This exercise will give you a good base for moving forward in the direction you want to go. That doesn't mean the things you did in the past were mistakes. No, you just take all that past experience, good and bad, and make a clear statement about how you want to do it differently in the future. Think of it as an honest and thorough inventory. A shop cannot close without an inventory. A proper change cannot be implemented without one, either.

After you have decided what needs to be done differently, drop the things that no longer serve you. Any processes that cost you money, emotions or energy need to be discontinued. This is perhaps the most painful part of your strategic planning and will require some creativity on your part. If applied diligently though, you would be surprised how easily unwanted things start disappearing from your life, clearing a path for your new beginning.



A Possible Way for Achieving your Career Goals

When it comes to your career (or to any other area of your life for that matter), knowing what it is you really want is extremely helpful. I have come across many cases when the career change required was not even a big one but because of the lack of clarity it certainly looked like it.

Having a satisfying working life and a successful career is not easy. We often start with wanting something really badly. Then the circumstances force us to re-consider and compromise. So we do it, thinking, well, the day will come for me to return to my original plan. Only the days are passing and we start slowly losing sight of our original dream. And once we lose sight, we become lost. Working becomes a tool for survival, stripped of any joy and enthusiasm it once possessed.

And yet, it is possible to accept many different twists and turns in our career and still arrive at our original, dreamed destination. The trick is to never ever lose sight of it and only adjust our initial vision if we want to, and only adjust it how we want to.

By now you are probably saying that this is just loads of unrealistic talk but in reality, I am sure you know somebody in your surroundings who has done just that.

I, personally, have many clients for whom just to imagine their ideal day and their ideal working environment was such a powerful exercise that it brought back the clarity about their career and what they wanted from it. From then on, they became unstoppable; not wanting to lose the momentum and the newly discovered excitement was a major driving force behind their actions. And because that excitement is contagious, the offers started coming. And my clients burned bridges, moved countries, made the craziest of decisions but arrived at the point where they had always wanted to be.

If you are also at a crossroads and thinking about the right direction, visualize your final destination. Then accept that some roads might take you longer, others might represent a shortcut but in the end, if you keep your vision untouched, you will get there.

Just remember to enjoy the trip, you don't want to arrive at your dream job as a tired, bored and grumpy person.



2 Ways to Change Your Career

For many people, changing a career represents something they wish for, think about, possibly dream about and...do nothing about. It is such a common phenomenon, almost everybody knows somebody who desperately wants to change a career but doesn't know how. It is also common to most people to want to change their career without too much disruption and while still having a stable income.

For those of you who are in a similar situation, I would suggest the following. Nothing is impossible if you have clarity. Being clear as to what the new career should be, in which field, which position, with what level of income, is extremely important. It is difficult to create and execute any plan if you don't know what you are planning for!

Once you have your final outcome clear, you can decide which way to go about achieving it. There are two very realistic ways.

Option number 1: you stay in the same field initially but try to get a job in the industry that is of your preference. For example, if you are an accountant but desperately want to do PR in the music industry, then you should keep applying for accountant jobs within the music industry. After all, each industry needs an accountant, right? Getting a job like that should not be unrealistic at all. Once you work as an accountant in the music industry, you can start branching into PR by attending courses, following closely how PR people work within the company etc. With patience, persistence and outstanding work results the day will come when the PR department will look for a new person and voila, you will be the obvious choice!

Option number 2: you do it the other way around. You stay in your own company/industry and when you have built your reputation as a reliable and outstanding accountant, you ask the company to help you train and over time transfer into the PR field. It is not unusual for companies these days to try and accommodate the preferences of their employees (especially the best performing ones). Once you have achieved that and become a PR guru within the same company, give it some time, let the results speak for you and when the time is right and you feel you are ready, you can apply for a similar job in the music industry.

In both cases your performance, diligence and persistence are the key. When you add your clarity and belief in yourself to the mix, your career change can be done smoothly and most importantly, with joy!



Is a career change the right step for you?

I worked with many clients over the years who one way or another didn't enjoy their current work situation. In some cases, they just didn't like the office and people they were surrounded with but they liked the Company. Then there were opposite cases, when their team was the only reason for staying but they despised their boss and they stopped having fun in their jobs long time ago. Then there were more severe cases, when the individual strongly disagreed with the Company's values and felt they were in disagreement with his/her personal values. At the other end of the spectrum there were those who just felt a "little uncomfortable and bored" when heading to the office.

Interestingly, while some of these clients were heading towards a serious career change, a majority at the end decided to work their differences out and stayed in their old work place but this time around being much happier. How did it happen?

There is one common mistake that many people involved in a day-to-day working process make and that is that their minds get "closed" within the environment they are in. For example: if you feel locked up in a constant argument with your boss or a colleague, you might feel unappreciated, belittled, de-motivated and frustrated. The arguments are something you come to expect and they become a "normal" part of your working life. Over time you might even forget that this situation is not normal at all and that, in fact, all you ever wanted was to be a part of a peaceful, respectful and fun working environment.

What you need to do is to realize that you can make your own decisions about your behavior at your workplace and the feelings connected to it. You can decide that in spite of your boss's moodiness, you will keep your cool. The behavior of others is their choice, the impact you let them have on you is yours.

Once you consciously make this decision and then live by it (be prepared, the implementation might take time), you will experience a profound change in how you view others and the way others view you. You will realize that you make your own decisions more easily and surprisingly, that others accept them. You will stop being involved in unimportant squabbles and you will become more focused on the task at hand.

Once you have achieved your piece of mind regardless of the circumstances, then and only then is the time right to decide whether a career change is still your highest priority. It might just happen that you become genuinely happy where you are at the moment.



Your Happiness and Well-Being

The Importance of Believing in Well-being

Do you recognize those situations when everything just seems wrong, when you feel that the whole world is going in the wrong direction? Well, it is enough to tune into any news to get my previous point confirmed.

And yet, there is still more well-being in this world than we are made to believe. How do I know? Quite simply, because I have decided to look at it this way. I have also decided to focus on the “good” in every “bad” situation. And for as long as I can find it (which is almost always), I am happy. It is not as difficult as it may seem.

My family was involved in a horrible car accident a couple of days ago. Yes, the cars were ruined; yes, there were tears and bruises but everybody involved was extremely nice to each other; the police were efficient and polite; the paperwork was done quickly and when we reached home and the whole shock of the accident hit me – I still had a good feeling about the whole experience! There was a lesson to be learned from it but there was a lot to appreciate, too! The feeling of well-being prevailed!

Just after the crash, my children became victims of meaningless bullying in their summer camp. It looked momentarily as if the camp was off for good and the summer was ruined. And yet, as a result, the rules in the camp have changed, the bullying behavior has been addressed, the boys involved have apologized and the atmosphere in the camp has cleared and brightened. My conclusion? Yet again, the goodwill was used and the feeling of well-being has been restored.

As for the TV news, In spite of all the bad you are exposed to on a regular basis, there is so much more good stuff going on – it’s just that nobody is mentioning it because it doesn’t sound so sensational. Listen beyond all you hear or don’t listen to it at all.

Put your energy instead into creating your own world where everything is well and then spread that sense of well-being around you. Your contribution to the world will be much bigger than sitting on the sofa and getting depressed by what you hear or see on TV.



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Mind Your Own Happiness

Imagine what happened to a friend of mine. She started her own business and because it was something she truly loved, it became an instant success. Unfortunately, at exactly the same time, her husband became unemployed and rather envious of her success. After a while he started criticizing her for various faults she didn't possess – in other words, he was trying to cure his own unhappiness by making her unhappy too.

As we all know, such a scenario is not unique. We have probably come across someone like my friend's husband in our own life, even though having a family member act like this might be a bit extreme. Or is it?

When you next recognize a similar pattern in somebody's behavior, you have a few options open to you.

Option A is to remove this person from your life firmly and immediately. This, of course, is not always easy, especially if the ties between you are very tight and strong. Another option is to separate yourself from the individual by ignoring that person and keeping the contact and the conversation to a bare minimum. Here, though, you run a risk of still being affected by the person and you haven't solved anything.

My favorite option is the following. You send that person lots of love and best wishes for their "recovery" and then you go and concentrate on your own happiness. This is your only responsibility, repeat, your only responsibility. You can't make other people happy, just like they can't make you unhappy, even if they try.

Try to surround yourself with people who will support you and for whom your happiness will be an inspiration, not a humiliation. Good luck with finding and recognizing these people.



The Evidence That Your Life Really Is Good

So many people complain about their lives and, sure, most of them have good reason – not enough money, boring job, spoiled children, not enough respect from peers, not enough time etc. And yet, there exists evidence that your life is actually all right, if not simply great!

The evidence is all around you. All you have to do is stop your process of complaining and misery, interrupt whatever it is you are doing or thinking about, and look around you. Yes, the Earth is still spinning, the clouds are still moving, and the grass is still growing. Everything in the universe has its reason for being a certain way and so do you!

There is a reason why the current situation is what it is. You need to explore it and ask yourself, what can be learned from this – and move forward in life.

I recently met a client who complained that for the last 10 years he's secured jobs by contacting the same recruitment agency, but for the past year nothing has come through them. He has been unemployed and very surprised that things were not going his way. Well, as I gently explained to him, life is not about sitting and waiting for the same agency to deliver. He needed to learn a lesson of surviving without the agency. He needed to get off his chair and explore different options, start thinking more creatively and actually re-evaluate what he wanted from life.

Whenever you find yourself in a desperate moment, please understand that there are always ways out of the situation – and by stretching your mind to look at those ways, you are growing as a person. Next time a similar situation occurs, you will know what to do, and move forward much faster. Just remember that everything takes time but as sure as the grass is green, your tomorrow will be better than today if you decide to make it so.



How to Create and Live your Ideal Day

Creation of an ideal day is one of my favorite exercises I do with my coaching clients. It is very easy. All you have to do is to close your eyes, imagine your ideal day, from the morning until the evening – and be sure you are not describing your holiday but a normal, straightforward day, albeit ideal. Then you describe all of what is going on in your ideal day: where you are, who you are with, how people behave towards you, what you wear, etc. Once the image is firmly sealed in your mind, put it on a piece of paper and that's it. You are done.

The next step is very simple. Put that description somewhere where you can see it, every day. If you don't want anybody else to see, that's fine, just keep it somewhere where you can access it and read it on a regular basis. Then you wait for this day to become a reality.

I know it sounds too easy to be true but I've seen this magic working so many times in my life, and in the lives of my clients, that I swear by it. The trick is to allow yourself to be who you want to be, to be with whom you want to be, to be where you want to be, to do what you want to do, to have what you want to have... Basically, it requires (and I can't stress this enough) your honesty.

If your boyfriend doesn't fit into your ideal day, then that's your answer to that relationship. If you see yourself painting instead of selling perfumes, then that is your answer. If you spend your ideal day in the countryside yet you currently live in the city, then that is your answer.

If you ever feel that you have lost your direction in life, this exercise will put you straight back to "knowing" again. Just a word of warning – the ideal day doesn't materialize over night and without you doing something about it. From my experience, though, once you know your direction, you will become unstoppable. Good luck.



The Easiest Way to Get What You Want

What do you think is the easiest way to get what you want? You would never have guessed – the easiest way to get what you want is to ask for it!

I have learned this the hard way, when negotiating prices with my customers. I constantly felt undervalued and, as a result, de-motivated. And then one day, I decided what exactly it was I wanted (in this case, what fee), started asking for it and ... getting it! Nothing brings you greater results and makes you feel happier in the process, than when you know what you want and then ask for it.

This, of course, is true in any situation, not only in business. How many relationships fall apart because the parties involved don't express what it is they like or dislike, want or don't want, clearly? I have a friend who decided to leave her husband of 5 years because she wasn't happy. When he asked for the explanation, she went on for 2 hours non-stop telling him all that had been wrong. He was left utterly perplexed, as she had never shared these feelings with him before! It was too late to save the marriage but things could have gone differently, had a proper communication process been established earlier.

The same applies to situations at work. Imagine you tell your boss the following: "I would like to be promoted". Well, wouldn't we all? Then imagine saying something like this: "Next time, when the position XYZ becomes available, I would like you to consider me. I have been working in this field for x years, I see where things can be improved and I have some ideas for their implementation. It would mean a lot to me and I would really appreciate it if you would consider me". This statement might be a bit longer but it makes an impact and the right impression that you really want the job.

Another advantage of communicating exactly what you want is that if you want "A", you will not be offered "B" or "C" or "D". The way to "A" might take a bit longer but when you finally get there, the joy would be so much bigger, because you got exactly what you wanted.



More Options for Your Happiness

Here is a very simple recipe for increasing the chances for your success and happiness. If you haven't reached that level yet, where you can officially proclaim that you are happy with your lot, try the following method next time you face a problem.

Many of us run in cycles and keep having the same type of problems or situations turning up in our lives. And every time, we probably try to approach them by using the same solutions – otherwise they would not be occurring again, right?

Next time, when a situation like that comes back into your life, look at it and ask yourself what the possible ways of solving it are. Then, instead of the usual few, much-tried much-failed options, force yourself to come up with many more (5-7) options. Some of them might seem outrageous at first but don't let that bother you for the moment.

Why does the higher number make such a difference? Well, your obvious, previous 2-3 choices would come to your mind first, because they are the easiest options. The trouble is they haven't worked so far, otherwise you would have solved that particular problem a long time ago.

By pushing yourself into the options you haven't tried before, you are putting your creative juices to work and when they are at work, many completely unexpected ideas or solutions turn up. Also, new ideas rev your motivation, so their implementation becomes easier.

Once you have tried stretching your imagination into new ways of thinking, it will become easier and many good ideas will come through. Give it a try and you will see for yourself.



Perfect Your Present to Improve Your Future

You might have heard many times how important it is to focus on living in the present moment. Yet, at the same time you keep hearing: set yourself goals, plan for the future, clarify your desires, etc. How can these two recommendations go together?

Well, the simple truth is, a better future can only find you if you perfect your present. If, at any given moment you make sure to get the most out of the present moment, the future events will follow in exactly the same footsteps!

Think about it as sending signals to your future: “You see, this is what I like. This is what I want. Bring more of it into my life, please”.

How to make most of the present moment then? Firstly, if at all possible, try to get into situations that make you feel relaxed, comfortable and happy. If such situations are a rare occurrence in your life, well then you have to work at that. You must concentrate on creating more of these. You can achieve that by addressing your feelings and watch which situations are pure bliss and which ones make you feel uncomfortable. Then increase the number of situations that make you feel good and decrease the number of situations that make you feel bad.

Once you have made sure that you have eliminated situations that you don't want, enjoy every single moment, keep dreaming and trust that your perfect future will find you at exactly the right time.



Do you have your “Feel Good” Thermostat Switched on?

Have you ever noticed how certain activities you perform turn at some point along the way into an “effort”? How the joy that used to accompany them disappears? I am sure you can think of plenty of situations like this.

Another question is this: have you ever stopped to consider why you feel that way? Has it occurred to you that, maybe, just maybe, these activities/pursuits/situations don't suit you anymore – that you possibly don't need them anymore?

I know we have been made to believe that life is supposed to be a struggle. We think of it as being a “tough cookie”, undertaking the “obstacle course”, being the “hard one”.

However, being happy is our birthright, even though I understand this is hard to believe. A path to happiness is to engage in activities/situations/pursuits that make us happy. Why is it then that we don't do this? It is because we don't take time out to consider our options. We get stuck in the rut of our everyday obligations without even thinking about the possibility of doing things differently.

Instead of watching TV and complaining how boring the program is, go for a walk – wonder at the miracles of nature and enjoy the sunset. The quiet moments in nature help you to quiet your mind and bring forward new and original ideas. Or instead of gossiping about fellow co-workers, spend some time helping a new trainee. Giving to others brings the feelings of contribution and happiness.

The process is very simple. Check with your feelings regularly and evaluate how your current activity scores on a “feel good” scale. If it scores high, keep going. If it scores really low, find the alternatives that will possibly make you feel better. The alternatives are always there for you, all you have to do is to find them.



The Value of Your Happiness is Greater than You Think

I know I use a lot of examples of children, but I believe they are so pure when they are young and we can learn a lot from them. Do you recognize that feeling when you come across a content and smiling baby, how you automatically feel like touching it or at least returning the smile? You do it almost instinctively; your reaction comes naturally.

What about when you come across a grown-up who is happy and positive? At first you probably think that the person cannot be real, but if it happens on a regular basis you gravitate towards such a person – the pulling power is irresistible.

What is stopping you from becoming such a person? If you become fun, you will bring fun to those who surround you, thus adding value to their lives. If you become happy, you will spread that happiness (as established earlier in the article), thus again, bringing value to others.

The way to achieve this is to look at your own needs and desires and follow them. Don't suppress your inner callings or intuitive nudges. Follow what feels right and you will achieve that elusive state of contentment.

Once you reach that state, you will radiate so much positive energy that you will become an instant inspiration to others. Imagine that – doing things that you like, making yourself happy in the process and inspiring others on top? The value of your own happiness is greater than you think, indeed.



The Easiest Way to Your Fulfillment

To feel fulfillment in our lives is one of our highest aspirations. Quite often, though, the desire to feel fulfilled means we mistake temporary achievements or gathering of possessions for this feeling of contentment.

Sure, it feels good to get a new car. We enjoy it for a while but then the excitement fades away; the new car becomes normal for us and we are off after our next pursuit. The same goes for other highlights: promotion, salary increase, new partner, bigger house.

The thing is, if we are not fulfilled inside, none of the above will make us happy over a long period of time. I believe that to feel truly fulfilled we need to fall in love with our inner selves. That emotion will carry us through anything and we will feel fulfilled, even if we have nothing.

Feeling fulfilled is not the same as feeling good. You can go through a rough day and through a range of emotions and still feel fulfilled! In fact, sometimes you actually have to go through activities that do not feel good to feel fulfilled! In my case, I started kick-boxing lessons recently in order to improve my stamina. Does it feel good to deliver punches and be sweaty within the first 3 minutes? Heck no! Do I feel fulfilled? You bet! I am trying something I have always wanted to try; I am pushing my own boundaries and feel on top of the world through it all!

Fulfillment is about being truly alive. It is about expression of who you really are. Throw away all those “shoulds” and “wants” and “must haves”. Enjoy your real, fulfilled self. It is much easier than you think.



Time for Yourself – Anybody Interested?

A while ago, I ran one of my workshops and something interesting happened. Before I tell you what this was, I have to point out that the participants were all female – I wonder then, if the following “syndrome” is something typical for women only. I’ll leave that to your own judgment.

At the beginning of the workshop I asked the participants to put aside their families and their needs, their jobs and the demands connected to them. I asked the ladies in the class to concentrate (for the purpose of the workshop) purely on themselves; on their wishes, desires and goals. We underwent the entire process of how to make perfect goals, step-by-step.

My surprise came when, at the end of the exercise, I asked them to read some of their goals to me! The goals were very similar to this: “I want to have...for my children.” “I need to....for my husband.” “I deliver....for my boss.” Most of their goals were tailored around helping out somebody else!!!

I was left wondering – is it really so difficult for us to put aside 3 hours of our time and be utterly and shamelessly selfish? Is it impossible not to focus most of our actions on those around us? Was the concept of prioritizing ourselves for a while really such a foreign concept to those fabulous ladies?

If you find yourself thinking along the same lines as the ladies in my workshop, I would like to ask you to go somewhere quiet and think about your life and who you are living it for. It goes without saying that doing things for others is part of who we are as human beings. However, devoting at least a tiny little bit (if not more) to ourselves and our own thoughts and desires on a daily basis is a must.

If you realize it and start doing something about it, you will be surprised. You will feel more valuable to yourself and become instantly more valued by others. Just you wait!



The Connection between Progress and Happiness

Recently I was listening to an audio program by Tony Robbins, one of the biggest self-development gurus, where he mentioned an interesting sentence. He said: “Progress brings us happiness”.

I have to say, I agree with that statement. I think nothing is more de-motivating and down putting than lack of progress. In my view, progress doesn't necessarily have to be big, as long as it is continuous.

One of the biggest mistakes we make is that we want to achieve many things and achieve them fast. Quite often, it just doesn't work that way. If we instead learn how to enjoy the simple, smaller steps towards the same outcome, the whole journey would be much more enjoyable.

Remembering progress is important in situations when we feel dull and bored. Ask yourself honestly, whether your mood could possibly be connected to the lack of development and progress in your life.

True, sometimes our career hits a plateau (for the time being) or maybe finding the right partner seems to be a challenge. If that is the case, implement development and progress in other areas of your life. If you learn a new skill or language, it might open up new possibilities with your career. If you join a sport club to learn a new sport, you might just meet that partner of your dreams there.

The point is, don't stand still. The world around you is moving and you'd better start moving with it. Or you can sit and wait for your happiness forever.



Bonus
Your Spirituality



Is Spirituality Just a New “in” Word?

Have you noticed how recently you hear the word “spirituality” much more often than you heard it before? When I was growing up you were either religious or agnostic. Those who didn’t fall into any of these categories were thrown into the box called “New Age” or just “weird”.

These days, however, spirituality is beginning to have a voice of its own and very rightly so. Are you familiar with the story of J.K.Rowling, the author of Harry Potter? She had exactly the same struggles in her life as any one of us, except, she wanted more out of her life. The idea for Harry Potter “dawned on her” when she was at her lowest point. As a result, she, (as opposed to many other human beings), did the following: she listened to her inspiration, accepted it, followed up by taking an inspired action, carried through with it and the rest, as they say, is history.

Do you ever listen to your inner voice? Do you honor the ideas and inspirations that you are getting? Do you trust it or ignore it? Did you ever experience that the same ideas keep coming back, as if prodding you into action? What do you do then?

Listening to your inner voice and actually trusting it is the least you can do for yourself. If still in doubt, you can do a simple test. Whenever you have a decision to make (and it can be a small one, since you are in a “testing mode”), just ask yourself for the answer and then be still and quiet and observe what word, image or feeling comes to you. That is your answer and the truth is, you will never be able to get a better advice from anybody else.

For you see, you have the most powerful tool right inside of you. All you have to do is to open up to it, give it a voice and then listen carefully. You can call it spirituality, intuition, inner wisdom, Higher Self, the choice is yours; as long as you acknowledge and welcome it into your life.



A Few Words about Energy

My son is almost 10 and he recently started his “I am into hip-hop now” phase. As a result, the latest CD by the Black Eyed Peas landed in our household and we all had to listen to it and express our opinion.

Trying to be a “go with the flow” mother (at least in certain areas), I happily listened to the music and the lyrics and actually quite enjoyed it. What surprised me, though, was when my son explained that the “E.N.D.” of the title stood for “Energy Never Dies” – what a powerful title that is!

It struck me immediately that everybody should remember this phrase, whatever their situation is. For energy is always around us, moving exactly in the direction we want it to. You keep thinking negative thoughts and the energy around you swings towards negative things happening to you. You make sure your thoughts are positive and re-assuring, and the energy reacts accordingly. This belief was proven to me recently, when all the houses on our streets got broken into, one after another over a period of time. I had decided right from the beginning that it was not going to happen to our house and sure enough, we were the only house left untouched.

I know that life can get tough, even super tough. I know that writing the words about energy is easier than dealing with some situations that life can bring upon us. Remembering, though, that everything is moving and changing all the time should be enough to keep us hopeful that one day the change will touch us too. If, on top of this, we believe this change will be positive, so it shall be.

Go on, do all you can to shape your energy the way you want to and if you feel like listening to some music along the way, the Black Eyed Peas album is highly recommended.



A Word or Two about Emotional Vibrations

Do you know the following quote from Abraham: “When you emerge into the day, let your vibration be the dominant one. Your vibration of joy, your vibration of growth, your vibration of freedom, your vibration of love, your vibration of all is well. And anybody that is out there vibrating in discord with that – will vibrate somewhere else.”

I love that quote! What I like the most is the re-assurance that if you remain positive and focused on your joyful emotions and on what it is you want, everybody who is in your way will get lost! Isn't that just great?

I have heard many stories about the dreadful boss being transferred elsewhere or the misbehaving boyfriend finding himself a new girlfriend, thus just disappearing and sparing the ex-girlfriend the pain of dumping him!

When the people whom you no longer want in your life persist, there must be a reason for it. You need to look deep within yourself and find out what is keeping you attached to them. Maybe you are learning something from them? Perhaps your vibrations are good when it comes to everything else but still awful when it comes to this person?

Don't waste your time thinking up a vicious plan on how to avoid such people or get rid of them, the Universe will do it on your behalf, if you let it. Just remember, even towards people we don't like we need to send the vibration of love and peace. At the end, they will either accept it and their behavior will become loving and peaceful, too, or they will be removed miraculously from your life. Try it and then wait and see!



The Ancient Wisdom of Kung Fu Panda

For those of you who have children, you have probably seen and enjoyed the movie Kung Fu Panda. For those of you, who don't, you might want to consider watching it; it can teach you a lot.

Poor Panda, the main character of the movie, has to overcome a lot, push a lot of boundaries and break many beliefs he held about himself. Along the way he gets a lot of advice from those who are more mature than him and plenty of it we could apply to our everyday life; but from all of that wisdom, there is one that stood out for me.

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery but today is a gift” is a sentence that helps Panda eventually turn things around. I know we all recognize something similar from other places where we might have heard it. For me, though, this particular phrase has a special sound to it and so I stick with it.

It comes really handy in situations when you worry about a certain outcome, even though that particular outcome is out of your control. The statement helps when you are beating yourself about the past mistakes which you can do nothing about any more. And it points out the importance of presence as the only guarantee you have.

Remembering those simple words in your hardest moments is a reminder that all that you have is now and the way you deal with it is up to you. You can start treating yourself with respect right now. You can pick up the phone and call that person you have missed right now. You can apply for a new job right now. You can start treating people with kindness right now.

To accept the above and change your perspective might not be easy but look at it this way. If the animated character can do it, surely you can, too?



Looking at Life from a Perspective of Love

Quite often in life we get overwhelmed by negative emotions, such as anger, disappointment or sadness. Even more often these situations are caused by somebody else in our lives, mostly because we allow it to happen.

It will probably seem hard at first but try to do the following exercise. Whenever you find yourself in a situation when you feel that the “negative part of you” is getting the upper hand, try and look at the whole situation from a perspective of love.

Surely the people who upset you have some love inside of them for you or for somebody else in their lives or even just for themselves? Surely some love is present in each and every situation we find ourselves in?

For those of you who have children, especially small ones, you can see the magic of this exercise working right way. Because no matter how much you get upset with your children, they still look back at you and you can still read in their eyes how much they love you. They don't think about it and overanalyze it, their love for you is their reality and that's it.

If you feel that some situations don't allow for your love or you simply can't feel it no matter what, then turn to yourself. You can always rely on that one certainty of your life, your love for yourself.

For those of you who struggle with that emotion, get quickly into it, loving yourself is the least you can do for yourself. By doing so you can prove that as I said in the beginning, no matter what the circumstances, a certain amount of love will be always present.

It is entirely up to you how to use that knowledge but when looking at situations from a perspective of love, they just might lose their nasty edge and allow for a more peaceful resolution.



My Take on “Avatar”

Have you seen the “Avatar” movie yet? If you haven’t, I would recommend you do. I was not too eager but succumbed to the pressure of my children who succumbed to the pressure of their peers at school...and so we went.

I have to admit that the movie has a lot to offer and I was asking myself why exactly it has touched me so much. I am not into gadgets and special effects, even though they were spectacular. The love story was fine but obvious; the ecological message was strong but didn’t trigger my overwhelmingly positive experience.

What spoke to me the loudest was the spiritual context of the movie and its strong message. And I don’t mean the spirituality a la “Ghost” (the movie) but spirituality in its broader meaning.

I strongly believe that this century will mark a strong shift towards spirituality and I don’t mean it in a religious way. I mean it in a way where we are all united in this big Universe and impact of an action in place A triggers a seemingly unconnected reaction in place B. Yet, over time those events prove to have more in common than anyone would ever guess.

The same goes for relationships among us, humans. Imagine you help someone, just because you feel like it and as a result you affect the life of another human being, who, as a result is in a better position to help somebody else or at least be more pleasant to somebody else...and thus the ball of positive energy is rolling.

Yes, we are all connected and we all have the ability to bond as was displayed very endearingly in the movie. What remains is to take these ideas and put them into practice.

