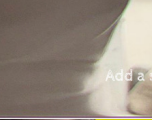
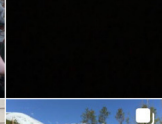
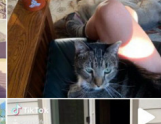
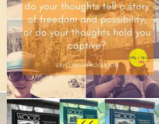
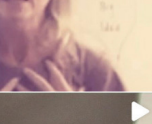
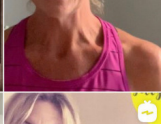
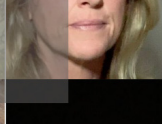
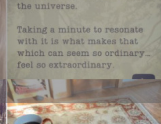
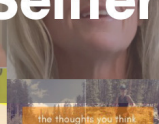
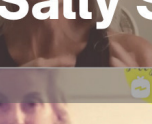
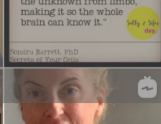
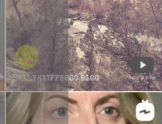
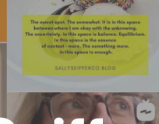
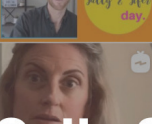
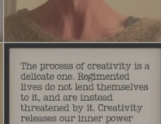
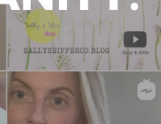
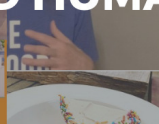
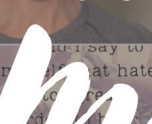
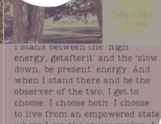
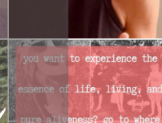
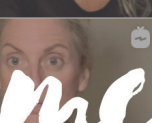
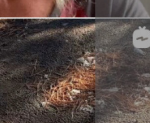
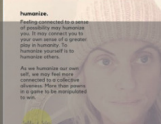
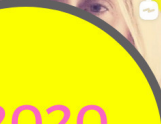


Magic Belief Possibility.  
A mist. An essence.  
Something more.  
It exists. If it didn't you  
would never feel less.

sallyseifferco.blog

Inspired from inside, it's personal.  
It feels expansive. A state of possibility.  
It exists. The fog has  
lifted.

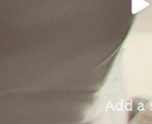


#2020  
A YEAR  
IN A BLOG

Something  
More

CONNECTING TO THE PULSE  
OF A SHARED HUMANITY.

Sally Seiffer





SALLY SEIFFER

## Something More.

*Connecting to the pulse of a Shared Humanity*



*First published by Sally & Sifer 2021*

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*First edition*

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*Find out more at [reedsy.com](https://reedsy.com)*



*the Something More.*

*In Stephen King's book, On Writing, he paints a picture of the imagination. He expresses the magic of creating a story in the quiet of the mind, penning it in language to share with another – no sound, no verbal exchange.*

*A story. From one quiet space to the other.*

*Magic.*

*The content in the blog posts came from a quiet space. A space of no resistance. I loved each post and was full of goodness and possibility each time I published.*

*Dedicated to the Something More.*



Now, scholars can be very useful and necessary, in their own dull and amusing way. They provide a lot of information. It's just that there is Something More, and that Something More is what life is really all about.

- the Tao of Pooh



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# Foreword

*Sally Seiffer is going to write the foreword for Sally & Sifer. I'm sure the next publish will have a very noteworthy and talented human write the foreword.*

The year of #2020blog began with a big idea. Too big of an idea. The 2020 big idea was one of my original ideas – to create online courses.

2020 was going to be the year I did it. Like the eight ‘eves’ prior to December 31, 2019. ‘This is the year!’ Like my entire life. ‘It’s really going to happen!’ I’m not sure how clear I have ever been on what exactly was going to happen.

#2020blog began with monthly themes that would drive monthly content. January met expectations. February had a story, but it never felt complete.

By March, I couldn’t keep up and then came quarantine. Quarantine was interesting. I assumed the school workload would lessen and open up time to work on the project. The school workload never lessened, and I allowed it to take over my time. Like most, it was a new work setting. I never got ahead of it.

I continued to blog on Saturday mornings, and post an Insta



blog quote midweek. The momentum of this routine became quite satistying.

In June, I was inspired to upload the content created for *self-care* (January) and *love* (February) into the Reedsy app to publish as an ebook. I am proud of this content. I know it can contribute to personal shifts and growth outcomes. This ebook is titled: *The Story I Tell. How to make the Age of Disruption work for you.*

My data for the effectiveness of my content is me. My ordinary experience of *day* has transformed. I am my proof.

In July, I began a YouTube channel named Sally & Sifer. The intention was visual content to complement the weekly blog. Each video would share three tools, skills, and strategies to implement the big ideas presented in the blog. It is a good idea. I had difficulty keeping up with it as I work full time.

I posted a short video on Insta on a Sunday evening as an apology for not following through on a YouTube video I said I would post.

Keep in mind, my audience is small. Very small. No one is commenting, direct messaging, or holding me accountable for content posts and uploads.

Still. I had posted on my Facebook page that I would share visual content on a new YouTube channel. I uploaded a short video to make good on the promise, and that began Sunday Story. Sunday Story has morphed into a 'nugget' share for inspiration.

I Sunday Story.

I create in the early morning. I live by myself. I prefer my own space. I love the quiet. The blog posts are written early Saturday morning. I sit. I sip on coffee. I resonate with the soothing environment. I do this every morning. Saturday morning has its own intention. I know the blog will come. Several mornings throughout the past year I woke up with the blog already written in my mind. The work is intentionally done without resistance. I don't want to write as a way to express my feelings 'against' anything. I want to share skills, tools, and strategies to validate humans and support the state of possibility.

The year was not without challenge. In June, I felt myself react to the events that were amplified as a result of the global pandemic. Inequities surfaced and could no longer be ignored. George Floyd's death got my attention. I moved toward antiracism in a way I thought I already had. I learned a lot in June. I continue to learn.

I felt the split leading up to November. I felt a side. It was difficult to understand. I knew the answer lived in a state of empowerment. The split of the powerful and the powerless is as internal as it is external. There is a mirroring effect. It is something I am curious to understand.

I only blog and publish from a state of possibility. The state I reference in contrast to a state of fear. A suggestion is that you read the posts from this intentional state of what is possible. What resonates is what is true for you.

*My mind is like the clear, blue sky.*

*My heart is like an open, green field.  
My belly is like the strong, orange core of the earth.  
My muscles, alert and relaxed like a superhero.  
My skin – calm, safe, and comfortable.  
Now THIS is me.*

*Sally Seiffer  
blogger*

## Preface

I love to write.

I used to write as an outlet for my anger.

You know the people who say they are organized, yet the observable evidence points to the contrary?

I was the person who believed they weren't angry, yet the content in my journals would have proved otherwise.

I stopped writing in grad school when a professor asked to see my journals. The professor was a licensed clinical social worker who was also the dean of the graduate school for social work. I was excited to show him my journals, mostly because of the sheer number of notebooks I had filled up. It was impressive.

When I went through the journals to glimpse the content I would be showing him was when I realized I wrote the same thing over and over again. I threw the journals away. I stopped writing.

I'm not so sure when I began again.

At present, the new version of my scrappy notebook writing includes a few variations. Maybe a fictional excerpt just for

fun and practice. Many affirming statements about myself or anyone for that matter – whomever is on my mind. A desired outcome – either stated in a scratchy written statement, or developed into a pleasurable story about what could be.

I write in every line of the notebook. I turn it upside down to fill in blanks. I use different ink. My notebooks would be confusing to pick up and read.

My notebooks. A notebook for each of my nooks. Three nooks established over the years in my small apartment above a mostly unused office space downstairs. I happen to have access to the office space as it is my brother who owns it. Another nook.

I write. I am a writer.

I created my first blog the year I completed grad school. It was deleted upon its creation, and I used a fake name. I felt like I had taken off all my clothes and stepped outside only to run back in. A dare.

I'm not sure what it is about posting your own content that can at first feel so bare, exposed.

And then. Just like that. It's not. It becomes a conversation. An outlet. A choice. A choice to write. A choice to read.

*What would you do if money, time, and other resources were of no issue or concern?*

I'd write.

# Acknowledgement

the accidental muse.

the quiet.

the smoosh.

Aside from the inspiration shared above, there are so many author's works to be acknowledged. Throughout the blog posts I name the original source as best I can. I have no intention to make claim to anything someone else originated. The concept of intellectual property is a difficult one for me to grasp. Ideas seem so fluid, as does influence.

A comparison of human growth/potential and original claims: As digital communication evolves, the next creation does not start from scratch, they build off the previous interface. The new creation does not acknowledge every human/scientist/designer that contributed to the building blocks of the most recent application.

As we enter into 2021, consider the amount of content that is available. So much content. So much influence. At present, I like comedy. I also follow a lot of Black influencers that I was turned onto in June during *amplify voices*.



I share creator's work to share access to the knowledge and the influence they contributed to my personal evolution and general transformation of *day*. I am influenced by everything and everyone – how can I not be?

Here is a list of shift changers as I remember, in the order of influence. I am not sharing to impress anyone – to the contrary. I am sharing because I was indoctrinated to cite my sources and I feel compelled to give SOME recognition. And for the record, I do not follow a specific belief system other than: I believe in nothing so I can believe in everything (not sure who originated that line...see what I mean?)

Also, I don't keep the books I read. I try not to hang onto much of anything once I have tapped it.

Earliest memory of inspired work:

John Wooden *They Call Me Coach*

Earliest memory of social and emotional learning that resonated:

Daniel Goleman *Emotional Intelligence*.

First conscious shift changer:

Brian Weiss *Many Lives Many Masters*

Breckenridge summer:

Wayne Dyer *Power of Intention, Change Your Thoughts–Change Your Life: Living the Wisdom of the Tao*

Thich Nhat Han *Mindfulness*

Eckhart Tolle *A New Earth* and *The Power of Now*

Mindfulness and Neuroplasticity:

Jon Kabat-Zinn *Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)*

Richard Davidson *Center for Healthy Minds. University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

Dan Siegel *Mindsight Institute. University of California - Los Angeles.*

*\*\*I swallowed their content - gulped...*

Life Coach influence:

Stephen Covey *The Leader in Me* and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Jinny Ditzler *Your Best Year Yet*

General shift:

Lynne Twist *The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life*

Sondra Barrett *Secrets of Your Cells*

Current:

Brene Brown *Unlocking Us* and *Dare to Lead* podcasts

Abraham-Hicks (greatest influence, most originating content I transfer in my posts)

Open in my apartment at the time of this publish:

Robert Schwartz *Your Soul's Plan*

Layla Saad *me and white supremacy*

Anodea Judith *Wheels of Life*

Bernie Clark *The Complete Guide to Yin Yoga*

Ibram Kendi *STAMPED racism, antiracism, and you*

Open in present time on the Audible app:

(too many to list)

first five:

Scott Sonenshein *Stretch*

*\*followed by three romantic comedies I'm too embarrassed to name*

Mary Karr *The Liar's Club*

Podcasts in the last week:

Dare to Lead *Jim Collins*

Unlocking Us *Dax Shephard and Tim Ferriss*

Dax Shephard *Christmas Special* (because I heard him on Unlocking Us)

Joe Rogan *Michael Kosta* (no way 4 hours...first hour I follow Kosta on Daily Show)

Favorite Instagram follows at the time of this post:

@tanksgoodnews

@halfbakedharvest

@beagoodperson

@theellenshow

@thedailyshow (this was #1 for months, I and follow all the correspondents)

Favorite show at the time of this post:

**TED LASSO** (thanks to *Unlocking Us* interview with Jason and Brendan)



# 1

## self care

state.

December 31, 2019

If you have read a blog post of mine, or if you pay attention to life-coachey, personal growth content, you may be somewhat familiar with the concept of one's 'state' - state of mind, state of being, mood or attitude.

Being curious about developing the skill of self-awareness can support a practice of noticing one's state - mood or attitude.

Consider the 'state' of feeling balanced. Not too much, not too little, enough. If you prefer the science-ey language, more than the fluff, think homeostasis. Equilibrium.

Does it make sense to you, considering your experience of life, that all living systems move toward a balanced state - and

obviously, the vast majority of the time maintain a balanced state. We could not sustain life if this were not true, right?

This simple strategy of noticing your own mood or attitude, and recognizing when you are either in balance or out of balance, can be a starting point to living a life that aligns with your own most natural state. A natural state that allows for a balance of feeling satisfied, while having a positive expectation for more.

Sweet.

Spot.

I can share two feeling states that I do not enjoy: feeling powerless and longing for something to be different.

The skill of self-awareness helps us to notice and name the state. Here is where fluff becomes relevant. Loving yourself and caring about the way you feel is what can level up your day-to-day experience of life – you have to care enough to believe that feeling good, being in balance, is the most natural way to be. Can you be open to desire to feel good – just to feel good?

If you believe, on some level, that you deserve to suffer (insert any interpretation of a belief that you are not enough), and you give power to the way it used to be, or the way it is for other people (longing) – then you believe that, and it's true. The only thing you get to feel good about is that you are right.

Without the awareness of being in a state of feeling powerless – guess what we often choose? Either more of the same – a 'victim'



mentality (so much fun to be around), or the desperate, often impulsive or contrived, need to get the power back and stay stuck, or keep spinning, in a game that never ends.

When you thoughtfully shift your state by implementing a skill, tool, or strategy that disrupts limiting or unhelpful beliefs that drive patterns of behavior – on purpose, with intention – you now have empowered yourself.

If you can be open to noticing (self-awareness) your state and be able to name it, you are on your way to a greater sense of control that leads to a more desirable state of balance – the space holder of possibility.

Start here.

January 1, 2020.

The fluff may begin to make more sense.

create.

January 11, 2020

***creativity is intelligence having fun. – Albert Einstein***

If you read the post I shared on 12/31/19, you may have resonated with the idea of how growing the innate skill of self-awareness can help you recognize the story you are telling.

If the storyline or theme is one of lack or limitation, you have an opportunity to disrupt the storyline and begin to tell a story that aligns more with your desired or preferred outcomes.

The question becomes, ‘how do I do that?’

I would like to share an excerpt from (the ebook) that supports the skill: to create.

You may notice that we all have our own idea of what it means to be creative. We may consider ourselves a ‘creative’ or we have already drawn a hard line by telling a story such as, ‘I am not creative.’

Create.

An action. A skill. An ability.

Whatever or however you choose to interpret it, you have it. It is also a skill that can be developed, as are all skillsets.

This brainstorm activity has one goal: to practice using and developing this skill.

Here is the excerpt:

*I met a new friend in Breckenridge during ‘the summer of change’ who was transitioning from being a full-time mental health therapist to being the owner of a coffeeshop. On a side note, it may be of interest to mention that working in a coffeeshop was my fantasy when things got overwhelming (which was often). She had boxes of*

books stored in her garage. I think that was where I found a copy of Shatki Gawain's Creative Visualization.

I used Shatki's chapter on setting goals as a strategy to **create** a desire for more. The reason I italicized the word **create** is because that is the skill that is being developed when we brainstorm new ideas and possibilities.

When I first got into this content area of self-development and personal growth, I thought I was on board with visualization. The concept of visualizing made sense to me. If you have ever been an athlete or interested in sports or performance in general, it is commonly understood that elite athletes and/or performers use visualization as a tool for top performance. Visualize the outcome you desire. Take in the sensory experience of the desired outcome – the feel of your body, the roar of the crowd, etc. This made and makes sense to me.

When I intentionally began to use this skill I found that it was not as easy as I assumed. When you create, by using your imagination, new outcomes and the sensory experience and details of those new outcomes, you are creating new neural pathways. By virtue of this being a new or underdeveloped pathway, you are designing it as if it doesn't exist or at least the familiarity of the pathway is not strong. As easy as it seems to create desired outcomes, it does take some focus to get started on new 'visions'. It also can be difficult in the early stages as those around you may not be on board with your new desires. Depending on the novelty of your idea (think Steve Jobs) you are creating new pathways that are not familiar to those who spend the most time with you, which can make relationships a bit uncomfortable. People have familiar pathways of relating to

*you and others in general (as humans we don't always do well with unexpected behavior – especially with people we have known for a long time). Let's not get too into the 'others' yet. Self-care is caring about yourself. The use and development of skills, tools, and strategies that grow your wellbeing is between you and you.*

*Shatki's brainstorming activity can support the experience of creating. Get on board by considering the development of the skill: to **create**. Notice discomfort and see if you can intentionally move toward the discomfort with a desire to shift into a fun, playful (creative) state by using the skill of creating that lives in the prefrontal cortex where fun and playfulness can be accessed. Notice the self-talk. A popular resource that I often came across in my own process was called 'the Artist's Way' by Julia Cameron. I never completed the course but I did begin it and recall Julia's discussion about 'the blurt'. She talked about listening for the blurt and flipping the blurt or being curious about the blurt. The blurt is that voice that can sound like self-doubt. For example, when you brainstorm your desires you may limit your capacity to create by this blurt that suggests that your desire is immoral, unconventional, impractical, etc. Self-awareness helps you notice the blurt and 'flip the blurt': what if I can\_\_\_\_\_, what if it WAS true, etc.*

*When we get stuck or find ourselves spinning in life results that never seem quite satisfying, we are most likely operating from the well worn neural pathways of familiarity. Whether or not these pathways are helpful or hurtful is not necessarily something we tend to consider. Outcomes are familiar (we have seen, smelled, tasted, touched this before) and the patterns continue to stay deeply embedded until we become aware of the patterns that limit us and intentionally disrupt them.*

*To become aware of the patterns is the only place to begin. But then what? Here is where our capacity and innate skill to create new outcomes becomes quite relevant. Once you recognize the thinking pattern (belief, mindset, paradigm) that is limiting you, you want to disrupt the pattern by telling a new story. We are living in the age of disruption (politics, retail, transportation, media, entertainment, etc). It is cool to disrupt.*

*Practicing tools that support creating new ideas helps us to grow new neural pathways and get out of the familiar well worn pathways that limit us.*

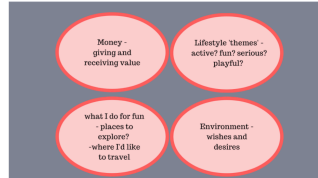
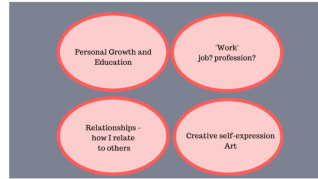
*I am not one to set goals as much as I am one to set goals. I tend to set themes and reasonable expectations for segments of time. I also like to create or write stories about my life unfolding in fun and fabulous ways. What the stories are creating is a state of positive expectation which allows me to enjoy the journey and the moment rather than be attached to, and obsessed with, a particular outcome. I return to this reminder often as I create this content. Obviously there is an outcome to publish a completed course. The joy (to enjoy) is now. The process. The journey.*

*This brainstorm activity may just be that – a brainstorm activity that supports your ability to create new ideas and outcomes. Creating is a skill, an ability. Everyone has it. Below are slides from a recent lesson to middle school students where I facilitated this activity. I also used the activity straight from the book in the original course I taught to high school students.*

## SOMETHING MORE.

### CREATIVE VISUALIZATION

Keeping in mind your present life situation, write down under each of the following categories some things that you would like to have, to change, or to improve upon in the NEAR future. Don't think about it too hard; simply write down any ideas that come to your mind as good possibilities.



### CREATIVE VISUALIZATION - PART TWO

Now...for fun and practice using your creativity and imagination...brainstorm ENDLESS possibilities...if ANYTHING were possible...what would you desire to be, do, or have in ANY category.



*The outcome of this activity is to have the experience of using your innate skill to create and to enjoy the fun and playful 'state' that creating preferred outcomes brings. Notice the 'blurt' and flip the blurt (this is a great skill to acquire).*

*What if I can?*



focus.

January 20, 2020

Do you ever think about your ability to focus?

Do you ever think about the absence of this ability?

I started to do this 'thing' with students when they are easily distracted in the office environment. I say (like it's a game): focus on the floor, focus on the door, focus on the window, etc. Then, 'who is in charge of focus?'

I'm developing some ideas of how to further the activity to support their level of understanding and sense of control - and curiosity - about this power to focus.

The students talk about the game Minecraft (and have since I began working in elementary schools). In my experience, the students have always been the voice of the 'wise old owl', the sage.

I know that if I can get a general outline for a lesson, once I bring it in front of students they are going to 'next level' it. They will hit it out of the park with their understanding, their questions, their answers, their interpretations and comments.

Minecraft. Survival or Creative mode. (I googled Minecraft for a quick reference and learned that there are five game modes: survival, creative, adventure, spectator, hardcore - even better).

For this blog post let's stick to survival or creative: what is your focus?

When we are focused on surviving through the day there is a definite sense of 'other'. The 'other' is out to get us, and our focus needs to be on making it through the day. Our reward is that we get to do it all over again the next day.

When we choose creative mode, we can choose a sense of control over preferred outcomes. Ultimately, it isn't so much the specific outcomes as it is 'doing day' with a perspective or focus of curiosity, that can transform into a sense of positive expectancy. As if something wonderful is about to happen.

*I create* when I choose to control my focus on desired outcomes that influence, and contribute to, a desirable state of positive expectancy. The word create suggests that the desired outcomes aren't necessarily happening in real time - we imagine or visualize our preferred outcomes. I recently read a quote about the difference between talent and genius: a talented person aims at a target that anyone can see and hits it, a genius aims at a target that no one can see and hits it.

Survival mode is operating from a sense of the opposite: expecting something bad to happen. We moralize this as the right way to exist: expect the worst and hope for the best. Really? That's inspiring.

When we are surviving there has to be an enemy. Something to fear.

When I practice my ability, my innate skill to be self-aware, I become one who notices my inside world, the sensations in my body – how I am responding to life situations, circumstances, and events. If I am truly in danger my intelligent stress response will take over. If not, I have some space to choose. Stephen Covey calls this space response-ability. I can choose how I respond. My thinking. The theme of my thinking is going to resonate with the story I tell. Is the story rooted in fear and doubt? Or love and possibility? Which theme keeps me stuck and/or spinning in familiar patterns that always include an enemy. Which theme levels up?

Taken from The Pause, newsletter@onbeing.org

*The civil rights elder Ruby Sales was a teenager when she marched from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. She says she was motivated to join the Southern Freedom Movement not merely because she was angry about injustice but because she loved justice itself.*

***“...and I say to myself that hate is too great a burden to bear. I have decided to love.”***

**Martin Luther King Jr**

STuFfeD.

January 25, 2020

When I used to catch myself wildly spinning on the inside, I would act as if I was my own defibrillator to disrupt the crazy. I'd get my attention by stating my name loudly and firmly: Sally.

And then, when I'd get myself to stop for a second, I'd say assertively: slowthefuckdown.

A visual would be like a teaching video on assertiveness training. Make eye contact, step toward the other, point in the direction of the other with all five fingers, and then make a firm and direct statement. I got my own attention and shook myself out of the spin cycle by using the essence of a cheesy assertiveness training video. This is the 'why' behind the name of the blog and my adult content: STuFfeD. Do you see the play on words? Slow.The.Fuck.Down. Consumed. Too much. Stuffed.

My method to shift my state was to care enough about myself to use the skills, tools, and strategies I was learning about through a variety of available content in books, videos, blogs, and live stream online trainings. The more I did it, the more empowered I felt and the Big Feelings eventually were no longer in charge. I always intended to teach long before I knew the content I would teach...or better said: long before I understood the content. And that's where Self-Care 101 came from.

The tagline, ordinary day...extraordinary way, is a little tricky to transfer as to how it came to be. The reason it's tricky is because it spawned from what I consider to be the most impactful, illuminating, transforming social and emotional program I know of: Challenge Day. When I taught Behavioral Health at Hemet high school in Hemet, California, I had a video tape called Teen Files: Surviving High School. The video content originally aired in September 2000.

I loved this video. The culmination of the teenager experience

shared throughout the show was the teens hosting the Challenge Day program at their school. I cried every time I showed the video to a class – as did a majority of students. I taught Behavioral Health for three years at HHS. On average I taught five classes a day. The course was a semester long. I watched the video at least thirty times over the three years I was at the high school.

Fast forward fifteen years. I was no longer working full time at one high school. I was embarking on an idea that I could be a ‘patchwork’ school social worker and somehow only teach and facilitate social and emotional learning. I was working at three different schools in two different school districts. Neither school district was in Denver. I lived and still live in Denver. Somehow I connected with a person who had been an assistant principal in a Denver Public School and was now working as the director of a nonprofit to raise funding to provide DPS schools access to the Challenge Day program.

I attended two live Challenge Days at a middle school and a high school in DPS. Life changing, soul filling experiences. And then, as if that wasn’t enough, I was invited to attend an adult workshop facilitated by the creators of the Challenge Day program. Rich and Yvonne Dutra-St John were celebrities to me. Not only did I attend the day workshop once, I attended two years in a row.

Here is where it gets tricky. I love Challenge Day. In no way would I ever minimize its power or its effectiveness.

But.

I had a thought during the second adult workshop. This program was almost twenty years old. And it was the same. Challenge Day. I thought about the results I wanted for my life. I just wanted Day. What if it didn't have to be constantly at the intensity of 'cross the line'? If we were getting new results and growth outcomes, would the intensity lesson? Is our desired and preferred outcome Day?

I did not intend to write this much for a blog post. My intention this morning was to share a reflection on two of my favorite 'day' endeavors in real time: Orange Theory Fitness and Kindness Yoga. Two ends on a spectrum of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing to some extent. Often those who enjoy hard core fitness may say, 'yoga is not my thing - too slow and no impact', or those who enjoy a yoga lifestyle: 'OTF is not my thing - too high impact and fast moving.' Obviously I am generalizing.

At OTF the tagline is 'more life' with a focus on improving VO2 max to increase life expectancy. At Kindness, the focus is present moment awareness - getting to know the sensations of experience 'on the mat' and learning to be with what is. I enjoy both. To say I 'enjoy' both is actually an understatement.

It's not about an either-or. It's the both-and. I heard that saying first years ago during graduate school in a Marriage and Family Therapy course offered through the Denver Family Institute. I use the saying often to gain perspective - it doesn't have to be an either/or...it can be both/and. A Taoist vibe if you're into that.

I stand between the 'high energy, getafterit' and the 'slow down,

be present' energy. And when I stand there and be the observer of the two, I get to choose. I choose both. I choose to live from an empowered state where I am the choice maker. I am not one or the other of anything. I am all of it.

STuFfeD: self-care 101.

ordinary day...extraordinary way

## 2

### love

keeley.

February 1, 2020

Today is the first day of February. A typically atypical sunny, warm day in Denver. In February, it becomes easier to digest the pink and red hearts that show up after the new year.

The wildly creative theme of *love* was chosen for February.

As I am creating an online course, I'd love to share an excerpt from the introduction. It reads like a chapter of a story. It may end and feel a bit...unfinished. It full-circles in the course.

Here it is....

*No prologue goes unread by me. I love a good backstory. I love broad context to give meaning. Every 'situation' has a backstory. Every*



*human, every living thing, every 'thing' has a story.*

*Context.*

*When we are consumed, stuck or spinning, and reacting to life we miss the context – we miss the bigger picture, the broad view. Situations become isolated events that we respond to in often very scripted or routine ways. People become the role they are assigned by the perceiver, or perceivers. People become the role they assign themselves, consciously or unconsciously, as the receiver. The roles have rules as to how we act and respond. We become these robots, these vessels of predictable routine and behavior.*

*This is not living. This is not alive.*

*Keeley tells a story of love, without conditions attached to the love. Great love. Keeley is a dog. My dog. The dog I received. The lessons she taught me are easy to see now that she has been dead for five and a half years. The story of Keeley represents something more. Something bigger. We all certainly must have Keeleys around us all the time, everywhere. 'Keeley' exists. Love exists. We just choose to open up to it.*

*Love transmits. It has to be received. To turn away from love and possibility is suffering.*

Keeley

I have monthly themes. I looked at the year-at-a-glance calendar and wrote down the first 'theme' that came to mind

for each month. I can imagine the theme of *love* for February is quite shocking, as was the theme of *self-care* for January.

If you read my blog or have interest in my content, you will notice a trend: everything makes its way back to self-care – caring about yourself...first.

It's fun to have an idea. It's fun to have a theme to ponder, and to let it be what it is. When I finished the *self-care* content, I had already begun to think about the February content – *love*. For the past three or four days, I used my morning time to sit and be with this new topic – *love*.

Love.

Michellie.

Pronounced Muh-kee-lee.

Keeley for short.

Keeley was my first conscious understanding of what pure, whole, honest love must feel like.

I was living in Hemet, California. When asked about Hemet, I would refer to it as the poor man's Palm Springs. It was a relatively small (but not small...) and growing town west of the San Jacinto mountain range – the other side of Palm Springs. I had just bought a home. It was in the midst of the southern California housing boom. My co worker friend and I went to look at some new builds during lunch. I found a one story, three

bedroom that was being constructed. I walked into the trailer and said I wanted it. I wrote them a \$100 check for a home I later received \$77,000.00 that paid for graduate school tuition, just over two years later...(and that was after I had refinanced - original price \$172,000, sold \$310,000...it was a good time to buy a home in S. Cali).

The small housing development was on a river bed. The river bed, which was mostly dry, was observable from an easily navigated 'cliff' behind my across-the-street neighbor's backyard. It was a massive expanse of open land - no buildings or civilization in sight, just the front range terrain of the San Jacintos. I was a runner at the time and the expanse of land was drool worthy. An organic path system had been formed. You could see natural pathways from the lookout on the cliff, they followed the dry river bed. The land was an Indian reservation. The Soboba Indian Reservation had its share of 'tales' that I had heard about - what happens on the land stays on the land, sort of tales. The only thing the 'tales' did for my naive 31 year old self was suggest that I needed a partner to navigate the land with.

I was playing Bunco with a group of teachers and their 'others' from my best friend's elementary school. Bunco. Teachers. Yep. It was actually a lot of fun. On one Bunco night there was mention of a pregnant dog. A pregnant purebred boxer who stayed in a cage outside - a large cage that was part of a gorgeous fenced in pool and outdoor living space. The home was further away from where I lived, but it was built on a massive expanse of land that also spawned from the San Jacintos. All this land was being developed, the housing boom was in full force, a lot of wild was being disrupted. The pure bred boxer got knocked

up. The hunch was something 'wild' had shown up in the night.

And then came Keeley.

I visited the puppies shortly after they were born. There were two distinct types – half were big and white with fluffy fur, and the other half were smaller, tan with white spots – not so fluffy. I chose one of the 'not so fluffies' with a white necklace marking around its neck. The dog owners had a little boy. I told the little boy which one I wanted. He told me later that he put Keeley in his bed at night. I picked up Keeley at five weeks old. Clueless. The puppy still slept mostly, and moved seldom. I had nothing – no blanket, nothing. I laid it on the passenger seat. It didn't move.

I had no intention of ever writing this story. I suppose I also had no intention of ever not writing this story. It is a story that lives inside of me. It feels emotional to share as I type the words, but not because it's sad. Keeley isn't alive and hasn't been for some time. The emotion dwelling up, as the memories surface, is the emotion of love. The gush x 100.

I introduced 'the gush' in the original course. The gush is the inside, felt experience of what I call love. Expansive, open, light, free. A feeling unattached to conditions or outcomes. It exists. It shows up. It just is. We 'get' to feel it.

I became quite familiar with the gush when I received Keeley. I didn't have a name for it, but something was happening on the inside of me that was strong. It was stronger, and got my attention, more than anything else I had experienced up

to this time. I realized at some point that what I was feeling must be the inner experience of love in its purest form. There was no transaction between Keeley and I. Keeley existed. The feeling wasn't synthetic, something I could make more or less of necessarily. I couldn't hug her enough, give kisses enough, or tell her enough. I had to just have the feeling. I 'got' to just have the feeling. I could 'do' nothing but surrender to the feeling. Allow the feeling. The feeling was present when I was present with it.

By comparison, I think with other humans or even with other living systems, there is this actionable quality associated with 'love'. Little did I know at the time, I was entering into a rough ten year period. I say 'rough' because I am exposed to other people's 'rough' on a daily, and in hindsight, my 'rough' doesn't seem to compare. But. Feelings are feelings. And dark, empty, obsessive, controlling, hateful energy in motion (emotion) sucks no matter what the story attached reads like. As I went through the next ten years, I ironically - but obviously, so not ironically - got to do it with Keeley. Easy to see...now.

It's funny with dogs, we think we are in charge. We think our pet is so fortunate to have us. So easy to recognize now that love was ever present during my (what felt like) endless process of undoing and exposing the limiting, destructive stories that I was telling...about me.

*(end of the excerpt)*

love.

February 15, 2020

Two weeks ago I posted the first chapter of my dog story in a post called Keeley.

Today I am posting the last chapter.

*love exists.*

*I was just beginning my new journey toward love when Keeley died – loving myself enough to recognize that love was ever present, an energy. That’s not really true. I think we begin the journey back as soon as we come into this physical space.*

*When I practiced skills, tools, and strategies that aligned with the expansive energy, it felt good. It felt right. I had to care about myself (self-care) enough to be curious. If I could get curious, I could get to the next step. And then the next step. I can assure you that the space grows.*

*Keeley and I were on Sixth Avenue for two years after the Breckenridge summer. I wrote about the Breckenridge summer as a prologue to (part one in ebook: The Story I Tell. how to make the Age of Disruption work for you). Life events happened that led to a bankruptcy, moving, and Keeley dying all at the same time.*

*That was six years ago. I know this because Smoosh just turned six this year. Smoosh was just a puppy when I met her the week after I moved to Dakota Ave.*

*When I walk out my door the sign across the street reads, 'Unique'. Down from there is a dispensary, 'Livwell'. The corner across from Unique is a sign, 'Goodheart' – a veterinary clinic. Another sign: 'Sally' (beauty supply).*

*In looking back, it seems a painfully long process to get to my 'shift'. At present, as mentioned in the conclusion of self-care, I haven't had an episode in maybe close to three years.*

*I had the intention of creating online courses the school year AFTER the Breckenridge summer. I quit the full-time job the following school year and was certain mindfulness was going to be a hit. I was going to create online courses and facilitate workshops.*

*I got a part-time job at a virtual school which, to me, was all the evidence I needed – 'it' was happening. The virtual school didn't need, nor want, a social-emotional course creator – they wanted a school social worker.*

*I posted early videos on YouTube of the Check IN that I used at Virtual Academy – my first...technique?*

*I also created Movement.Breath.Kindness. for elementary classrooms.*

*My original idea was solid – online course creation and mindfulness as an effective tool to grow social and emotional wellbeing was not lacking in potential. What I didn't realize was that the idea was just that – an idea. A seed. I planted it and like a novice gardener, expected results much too soon.*

*My PhD, or my culminating experience in this particular developmental stage, came in the form of Kung Fu Panda. I was Po. I'll give the five year old (when we met – we hung out for three full years)... I'll give him Master Oogway. Shifu was a beast. We went hip to shoulder for most of his third grade year into half of fourth. A master teacher. The furious five round up all lived on my caseload – each with superhuman powers that transcended common understanding. The setting for the projection of this Kung Fu Panda live action play was Westgate elementary school. It was exactly what I needed to grasp the broad view of not only what it meant to be a school mental health provider, but what it meant to trust love.*

*Po was chosen to be the dragon warrior. The chosen one to bring peace back to the valley. We are all Po. Po was out of tune. Po didn't fit in. Po didn't know his story. Po was clumsy. Po was 'extra'.*

*But Po was really good at one thing: being Po.*

*We are the only one who can bring peace back to our valley.*

vulnerable.

February 23, 2020

This blog post includes the concluding segment to a (now unpublished) course: *love*.

Starting....now:

vulnerable.



exposed. raw.

This *love* content hasn't exactly wrapped itself up in a nice little package with a pretty bow.

I have mentioned here and there, and in between the lines, that I get up early to work on this project. I call online content creation/blogging a project because the word 'project' lessens my intensity around an end result. I love to write and create from a clear and connected space, and that space is easy to access early in the morning.

I got out of that space while creating the lesson segments for this content. It became more of a 'push', and a 'have to', to finish. I stepped away. I would like to share a few things that I was reminded of when it comes to *love*.

Keeley was not the first story I told about *love*. I had a Grandma. In the busy in-and-out of life as a teenager/early 20's, coming home for holiday and summer breaks, I would often tell this Grandma when she was around, 'I love you'. She would respond, 'no you don't'. I'd be PISSED.

When I moved back home after my first stay in Southern California, to work at the high school (reference *wild* from the *love* short story - ebook, part two: the story I tell), Grandma was living in a nearby nursing home.

On the weekend, I would try to visit. I actually liked the nursing home. I liked the people. I liked my Grandma. I thought she was funny. I also found her to be wise. I had made some peace with

some of the weird (ie. crazy) things she started to say prior to the nursing home, as I could see how dementia had been gradually rearing its fragmented head leading up to events that led to the home.

When I would visit, I would often paint her nails. She fell asleep a lot while she waited for me to do my salon version. I didn't want her to fall asleep because she would smudge her nails. One day, I had finished her nails and must have left to the bathroom. I came back and her head was down and her hands were underneath her. I said 'Grandma. Your nails!' She didn't raise her head. All she did was lift her hands. She had tucked her thumbs between her first and middle fingers so that they wouldn't rub against each other.

When I first visited the nursing home, I observed people at different stages of aging. At the time, my Grandma wasn't dependent on a wheelchair. Comparatively, her physical body wasn't in too bad of shape. She had a hunched back, but she was light (less than a 100 pounds) which probably made it easier for her to move. She was stubborn too, so she'd push the walker or the wheelchair rather than be pushed in it.

I remember observing the other people and thinking to myself: I can/will not bathe or diaper my Grandma. Not happening. Ever.

Let's just say that Grandma and I, as the years progressed, found ourselves in certain predicaments where the things I thought I could never do, were done.

At this time, I would tell my Grandma 'I love you'. And she would

respond, 'I know you do.'

Sweet. Spot.

The *love* this course content is suggesting is the energy of *love*. *Love* without observable behaviors, or conditions. The behaviors so often suggesting the 'proof' of our *love* for one another.

I know that my Grandma was not referencing my actions. She felt it. We had a different connection at that nursing home that we hadn't had prior. Growing up, and doing the day-to-day, makes it easy to lose that 'presence' that this *love* I am suggesting requires.

Love exists. It is an energy. We attune to it. Calibrate. The uncomfortable and undesirable life events, circumstances, and situations have a way of bringing us back to it.

I mentioned Sweet.Spot.

After my Grandma died, I would tell the story of *love* as it happened between she and I. However, I would reference my actions. And when I told the story, the energy of the story would suggest that we 'do' things for those we love. We go to the nursing home, we paint nails, we clean wheelchairs, we give baths, etc.

I was missing the energy of *love*. I connected *love* to a social narrative that loudly proclaims our actions to be the ultimate test of *love*. Sacrifice. Putting others first no matter what the cost.

This is where vulnerability comes in. If you aren't familiar with Brene Brown, you may like to be. She has a 'way' of sharing familiar, humorous stories that draw you in, and then she backs up her main teaching points with qualitative research.

Brene Brown's entire message centers around shame and vulnerability. I think that she says vulnerability is the antidote to shame. Brene has a great story about how she exposed her own vulnerability - which was the state that allowed the opening to the popularity of her current teachings.

The short version of her story is that she had a tight, packaged presentation that was bulletproof - she had data and research to back her findings. When asked to do a TED talk in her Houston hometown, she thought she'd share some personal stories, as she was familiar with the audience and it would be a different way of presenting her data (she told the backstory either in the preface of her most recent Leadership book, or on her Netflix special).

The TED talk went viral. Prior to her knowing this, she wanted to forget it had ever happened - she had shared too much. Too late. She references her shame spiral, and all the demons that showed up, as she had exposed herself (essentially) to the world.

Brene's end game wasn't popularity, but she uses her popularity as a platform to share her teachings. Those who receive and apply her teachings, learn how to do 'ordinary' from an extraordinary space of wholeness. Brene uses the phrase 'wholehearted' living.

When I reflect on *love*, and those that I feel deeply connected to, it is in the space of vulnerability where *love* seems to naturally flow.

The gush found me through those who came into my life in vulnerable situations. Keeley, Grandma Nance, suicidal/addicted/lost teens, and myself (reference: Catherine Zeta Jones story). It was vulnerability that cleared the space that allowed me to tune to it.

Here is where the sweet spot shows up. Often when one demonstrates vulnerability, the 'other' (and the 'other' can be yourself acting toward your own self) swoops in to care for the one who is vulnerable. This is where we create these enmeshed, or in some way, dysfunctional relationships. The relationship becomes dependent on one saving the other.

Children, animals, and aging or ill humans, are probably some of the easiest defined 'categories' of vulnerability. Easy to love (generally speaking). But then what? Are we the hero? Or does our definition of *love*, and what we 'have' to do, create resentment?

The sweet spot is opening up to the space of *love*. No one is saving anyone. No one is a victim. No one is a hero. We 'get' to have opportunities to allow the space of *love* to drive our behavior (what we choose to do, or what we choose not to do). The space of *love* is vulnerable.

Vulnerability and *love* allows for the sweet spot.

# 3

## anticipation

anticipate.

February 29, 2020

*she. lives in a state of joyful anticipation for the next great thing...*

March.

Consider the feeling state of anticipation. Does it create a sense of discomfort, or a sense of excitement?

In the physical experience of life, doing 'day' allows one to continually move toward a series of situations.

Life. A series of situations, circumstances, and events. Is that ever really going to change? I don't think so. (and if you are not moving toward situations, you are watching someone else manage situations on a screen - ie. 'television')

If you are like me, you may consider life's non preferred situations, circumstances, and events to be quite the bother, inconvenient at best.

This thinking will continuously result in a feeling of being stuck, or spinning, at some level of discomfort.

When we practice self-awareness, we pick up on trends and patterns of behavior - and the thinking that prefaces the behavior.

The magic of allowing for, desiring, and creating preferable outcomes, that can sustain themselves, comes in awareness of the feeling state. The feeling state hangs in the 'mist', between our thinking and behavior.

The feeling state of anticipation.

A situation presents itself. What happens next? If you capture a situation like a screenshot or a picture, that image captures a story. The story has a theme. We could deconstruct the hell out of this, but really - the theme is either rooted in the anticipation of the next worst thing, or the anticipation of the next best thing.

If you can pause here. Just take a second. Allow your own interpretation of what I just suggested.

It's huge.

Physical life. A series of situations. A continuous narrative. The narrative has a theme, a lens, a filter. Do you tend to anticipate the next worst thing? Or do you tend to anticipate the next best

thing?

Non preferred situations will never stop occurring, as long as we are in this physical life – contrasting/uncomfortable/unwanted experiences are fundamental to growth, advancement, evolution. The story we tell about the non preferred situation allows for the potential of a massive shift in paradigm/mindset that can positively impact our day-to-day ‘ordinary’ life experiences... making what can seem ‘ordinary’, feel quite extraordinary.

At school, I have been curious about a simple way to teach the nervous system. To adults, I have suggested that the story we tell results in one of two feeling states: open or closed. An open state allows one to access problem solving and higher functioning skill sets (executive functions), and the closed state accesses our highly intelligent stress response (fight, flight, freeze, faint).

With students, I am beginning to call the two general states: creative mode and survival mode.

Simply put: in survival mode there is an enemy, in creative mode there is no enemy.

The story I tell tees up the situation as relevant to the lens I am filtering the situation through: relativity.

Tomorrow is March 1. What do you anticipate?



belly.

March 7, 2020

It's a common understanding that when you teach a skill, you grow in your own understanding of the skill.

Anyone who teaches/facilitates can appreciate 'reps'. If you are fortunate to teach one lesson multiple times throughout the day, that lesson expands and takes on a more natural flow as the 'reps' build.

I love the opportunity to facilitate social and emotional lessons to....anyone. I know that my understanding of the lesson expands when I have the opportunity to practice.

The unique thing about facilitating skills, tools, and strategies that grow wellbeing is that everyone is connected to the energy source of wellbeing. The energy source of wellbeing drives the functioning of our cells and fuels all experiences; it is largely invisible, although the evidence of its existence is easily observable in nature.

Wellbeing is an experience. Knowing one's personal felt experience and the results that come when practicing skills, tools, and strategies is one thing; transferring that experience in a way that engages others with something that is relevant and easy to understand and apply, can be a bit of a challenge.

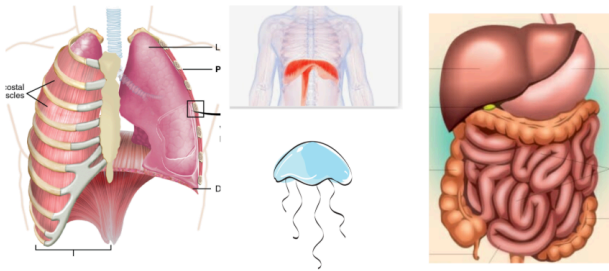
Jordan Smiley is a yoga instructor at Kindness Yoga in Denver. There's just something about Jordan...a something more...that

SOMETHING MORE.

is evident when you receive his practice. Jordan was posted on the Kindness Instagram feed this week. He basically broke down the science of belly breathing in a way that one can visualize, understand, and experience – in less than five minutes. I love it.

Belly breathing. So simple.

I made a slide for a visual if you would like to share with students.



***“Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts. Whenever your mind becomes scattered, use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again.”***

***– Thich Nhat Hanh***

force.

March 14, 2020

***“A force is any interaction that, when unopposed, will  
change the motion of an object.”***

***– wikipedia***

Several years ago, I had an opportunity to visit sixth grade students experiencing the Windy Peak outdoor lab school outside of Bailey, Colorado. I participated in a science class and observed the effects of destructive and constructive forces in nature. The hands on experience made me curious about the constructive and destructive forces that live inside my mind.

Using words like ‘force’ with kids of a certain age and interest level, can gain their interest. Most kids naturally understand the difference between destructive and constructive forces in nature.

The word ‘power’ is fun too. I like to say in lesson scenarios, ‘if we don’t tap into our own power, we are on one of two ends – powerful or powerless... when we tap in, or tune in, to our own power we are empowered.

Let’s say that power and a ‘force’ are the same thing. Energy.

Energy in motion. Emotion.

Let’s also say that our thoughts create the feeling state – emotion. Our feeling state can be in one or two ‘modes’ – survival

or creative. If you took a minute to read this blog and you are this far along, you are tapping into a feeling state of possibility. Survival mode isn't set up to contemplate.

Growing in your own self-awareness allows you to be an observer of your FITS - feelings, impulses, thoughts, and sensations. Mindfulness practice allows us to notice the experience of our FITS without necessarily needing to respond. And to have the experience without judgement, comparison, or criticism. Noticing. Allowing.

Take a minute to slow down and notice. Notice the theme of your thoughts. And without judgement, comparison, or criticism, notice if your thinking is destructive or constructive.

Constructive thoughts. Build. Design. Grow. Contribute. Lead to New Outcomes.

When it comes to day to day life, it seems irresponsible to not face whatever is immediate.

Unwanted, unexpected, undesirable events are termed reality - what is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched. Facts.

My guess is when major sporting events were cancelled this week, the advice the players got was to give themselves a window (24 hours - max) to have a pity party. And then....dream.

Plan. Envision. Wonder.

Anticipate the next great thing.

Constructive thinking leads to a desirable feeling state. Creative mode. Creative mode allows for anticipating the pleasure of unexpected outcomes that contribute to life and its abundance of possibilities.

Our thinking is a force that leads to a feeling state. Our feeling state transmits energetically. Momentum. Shift.

balance.

March 21, 2020

Definitely no shortage of 'how to' content available around managing 'big feelings' during a global pandemic.

Here are several tips that I find useful to support a sense of balance on any given day...

**Bookend.** Start and end your day accessing a neutral state. What does a clear mind feel like to you? If you don't know, it's a great reason to be curious. Knowing how you don't like to feel is great data for knowing how you do like to feel. If you are quite familiar with discomfort, take two minutes to yourself when you wake up to see if you can access a better feeling state. Do it for two minutes before bed as well.

Tip: Notice the center of balance within you - whether standing, sitting, waiting, driving, etc. It's immovable. It's in your core. Low. Between your hip bones. Balance. Center. Notice it. You can imagine breathing in that space and notice the expansion

and contraction. Start here.

**Segment.** You may already do this. I have a tendency to get mentally saturated. Segmenting my day (and planning the segment) has helped tremendously. Big scale I did this with Sunday afternoons – I used to dread them. And even before that, I visualized the drive home segment of my day after work and imagined what it would (look like, feel like, sound like) if I felt peaceful. I have graduated from both of those examples. Sundays are great, and drive homes feel good as well. When I get saturated, I segment. It helps.

**Plan.** A popular executive functioning strategy used in schools is a planning process called Get Ready.Do.Done. Here is my spin on it. Segment planning: start with done. What does done look like, sound like, and feel like? How long is the segment? Working backwards from there, what are three things to do (first, next, then). In my real time experience, I also practice a mindset or script where I say to myself, ‘all you ever have to do is the next thing’. So in these segments, if I have a lot of resistance, I come up with three incredibly easy onboarding steps that help get started. This is helpful for projects and chores, or catching up on work that you would prefer to not do. And then the last is Get Ready. What do you need? I use a mindset, or script, ‘be ready to be ready’. For example, if I don’t want to clean the bathroom (saturated – too much...resistant) I get it all set up to clean. I also put my physical ‘things to do’ (as far as errands) in the car – so I’m ready. Get Ready.Do.Done. is backwards planning which we do all the time anyway. It’s just creating intention around it. I love the way it feels to complete something – so when I focus on the end game, know three next steps, and have things ready

to go - momentum shows up when I move toward it. PS. I am so nice to myself. I encourage myself constantly. I let go of the pressure. (it works)

**Why.** This is another little mind script that I often say (I have a lot of them). *Why? And then what?* When you are having a hard time letting go of something, most likely you understand 'why'. Most of us can justify our 'why' with no problem. But then what? When the 'and then what' is limiting a relationship, a preferred lifestyle experience, a genuine pleasure....reconsider the why. It's easy to be substantiated in why you may be experiencing 'big' feelings, but if it's limiting you, it's not going to get you anywhere. The more you practice this, the easier it is to head off the negative/pushing against/'an enemy exists' inner voice - because you know it isn't taking you anywhere. There's nowhere you can go with it.

**Values.** I just did this again yesterday as I was thinking about today's blog. It's easy to get stuck on what you don't want. The only reason we don't want anything is because there is a something more, the opposite - what we do want. When we can catch this, we can choose to focus on what we do want. In the physical isolation segment of this current living situation, it may be clear that one of your values is freedom. What story do you tell about your own freedom? You may be able to have a substantiated 'why' - but if it limits you, where is it taking you? If you value certainty, maybe you value 'knowing'. And 'knowing' is more rooted in intuition. And intuition can be tapped into during those parts of your day that you reconnect with your center.

allowing.

March 28, 2020

*The following is taken from my unpublished online course content, Anticipation...*

I went to my first yoga class at a 24- hour fitness studio. Ellen. She was the teacher. Not that Ellen. Another Ellen. She had full classes on Sunday mornings. Thinking back, I'm surprised I kept going. I didn't know anything about yoga. It was a Vinyasa class. Fortunately, the flow was somewhat similar each week.

I did not like yoga. I wanted to like yoga. Some weeks were better than others. Some classes I would want to leave within the first twenty minutes. I didn't consider myself an inpatient person at the time, but the flow was not happening.

There was something about yoga. I wanted to not just like it, I wanted to love it. I wanted to look forward to attending class. I wanted to love it the same as I loved running. The concept of movement and breath made sense to me. I realize that sounds stupid, like 'duh' - movement and breath makes sense to most people. Again with the something more...there was something more about yoga.

When I moved up to the mountains the summer after I had turned forty, I was certain that this was going to be the summer I found my flow. I signed up for Hot Yoga. I went one or two times a week. Classes were long. Classes were hot. No flow.



It wasn't just the physical flow of yoga that was difficult. It was the other people. People were too close. There were smells. There were sounds...breathing sounds, sighs that I'd notice and obsess about. And then there was the balance, or the new pose, the depth and the long holds that would burn my thighs. This was not the experience of yoga that I imagined.

Unfamiliar instructors, not knowing how to use props, not wanting to see myself in the mirror, the sanskrit terms, the heat. Yuck. I remember thinking that yoga must have been hard because I was so tall. A friend called me out on that one. 'Really?'

When I made my way back down to Denver, I joined Kindness Yoga for the first of at least three times before I finally found my flow. I would basically donate to the studio until I would finally freeze my membership. And then do it again. Each time with hope that this time would be THE time.

The amount of personal growth 'input' I was paying attention to was huge. Books, blogs, YouTube videos, emails with links to meditations and life coaching programs. This started about eight years ago, and the availability of free content has only continued to grow. I was a sponge. I was taking it all in, and then I would tell people about it. I sounded like a book. I wasn't integrating the new knowledge into my experience. I suppose that's all part of the process of growth and positive, sustainable change.

At some point I realized that the tight grip I held on to for certain outcomes I wanted for myself, needed to be let go of. Most, if not all, of the personal growth content I was attracted to included

the concept of allowing. The experience of allowing is basically the opposite experience of the 'tight grip'.

I let go of the tight grip of 'have to' with not only this idea of yoga - and this isn't about yoga and the practice of yoga being so life transforming, it's about letting go of the tight grip. Letting go of all the rules and the 'have to's' or 'need to's' I was placing around 'happiness' and wellbeing.

I let go of the tight grip. When I would think of yoga and feel the resistance, I let go of the resistance by intentionally accessing the feeling state I had had with running - the desirable state. I would call this a feeling of positive expectancy - anticipating something 'good'. I accessed the feeling and imagined myself matching the 'frequency' of the experience of what I wanted the desired outcome to be - eager anticipation of attending yoga class. I started doing this with everything that I had resistance, or negative (closed) responses to (money, work, body image, blog/writing, course creation, etc).

In the current situation of physical isolation, I find myself naturally shifting without much efforting - the same way I used to shift into negative, I now shift toward positive - the way it will feel to return to familiar routines...a giddy feeling, a 'yay'.

If this sounds a bit too folksy, it's simply the opposite of getting stuck in the negative thinking patterns (ie. hallmark of depression...which was what I cycled through for decades). It's all energy. Our thoughts have an energetic frequency... a current...a vibration. Waves transmitting. Do you wonder how you connect to all the 'mediums' channeling content? A

particular channel of energy is transmitted and then received at its matching frequency.

When you find yourself missing, or 'longing' for a return to more familiar and stable routines, see if you can catch the feeling of what it will be like when you do return. Stick with simple things - like a fun group, or uplifting atmosphere that isn't available to you now. Access the energetic state of what you are missing, as if it is happening in real time. Now.

Wellbeing is not the absence of illness. Wellbeing is a state. A state of balance. In a balanced state is where you access the whole of who you are. That's where you get creative - you create....new visions, new ideas, new outcomes, fun possibilities.

This is all difficult to explain. It's the noticing and manipulating the experience of the inside world. I am attempting to interpret and share what I have found to get lasting, sustainable results. It works.

Consumed. STuFfeD (slow the f&\*k down) - Self-Care 101. Care about yourself enough to notice limiting patterns. Practice skills, tools, and strategies to disrupt the limiting pattern and create new desirable outcomes. Match the state of what you desire. Intentionally create a state of Positive Expectancy. See what happens.

# 4

## fresh

fresh.

April 4, 2020

Fresh and New. Fresh and new. fresh and new. (capitals make me crazy...and commas,,,,,,,) )

April blog. New theme.

In December, I decided I was going to create online course content every month. I also chose themes for each month based on the first thought I had about the time of year.

I like 'fresh and new'.

When I was facilitating weekly social and emotional lessons to elementary classrooms, I often repeated the phrase, 'any moment you choose you can begin again - fresh and new'.

I'd add - 'and you can do it over and over again'. Other sprouted sayings included, 'every moment is a fresh start, a new beginning', or 'every ending is a new beginning'.

I'm sure I read or heard someone else say these things first, in some context relevant to me at the time...they resonated...they stuck.

More recently, I hear myself often say in meetings about students who may have learning differences in the school setting, or have difficulty regulating themselves in (what I would call) a non-preferred setting, I hear myself repeating a script: 'the brain works in cycles, beginning-middle-end, just like a day or a breath...students with learning differences often don't complete things - they don't finish the cycle, and it creates a discomfort... a disconnect.'

Okay - so yes, if you are home schooling that concept is easy to apply - finish. Visual plan: first, next, then. Paint a picture (verbal working memory) of what 'done' or expected outcomes/behaviors look like, feel like, sound like. The saying 'don't bite off more than you can chew' is relevant here. Set yourself up to finish the cycle.

This blog is about self-care.

Cycles. Seasons. Springtime. Fresh and new. beginning/middle/end. Every ending is a new beginning. Any moment I choose is a fresh start, a new beginning.

All of these resonate with our experience. Real time.

I often share unsolicited advice about what I consider to be the best '1-2 punch' when it comes to regulating your inside world.

1. Find breath in your body. Slow down. Expand your lowest spaces (hip bones expand, back of ribs grow - these are new favorite cues for me...I like the experience/sensation of it, and it's different - so when you focus on these areas expanding, the focus gets out of your mind space...creating space away from the obtrusive thoughts).

2. Self-talk. Talk to yourself in a way that is encouraging... loving. Also, having your own 'go-to' short scripts is helpful because they become your new habit. A certain feeling shows up and instead of it cueing thoughts that match, or feed, the feeling, you meet it with support/encouragement that raises your state/mood and navigates you back to balance.

When our view of the world is external, we falsely believe that others are responsible for encouraging us, or the ones responsible to soothe the discomfort - same as we assume others are responsible for the uncomfortable feelings in the first place.

Never true.

Self-care is practicing skills, tools, and strategies that return you to wellbeing...balance.

The last thing I would like to share is a thought about the inside world. I have several connections to 'inside world' that I use in lessons. I also often speak of the cellular world - which is

ultimately what the inside (and outside) world is made of. Cells have three main functions – integrity, balance, and fluidity. Not to mention, cells are always replicating themselves so they are always fresh and new.

*Integrity.* In tact. Truth. Your truth. YOUR dreams, goals, desires. *Balance.* Enough. You can't NOT be enough. When you believe you are less than this, you are entertaining a belief that is contrary to truth. It will never feel good. *Fluidity.* Change. Flow. Adaptive. Flexible. Allow.

You are a badass who is functioning at a cellular level – fundamental to your existence is integrity, balance, and fluidity. It's the function of all existence. It's never missing. We just get out of sync. Attunement – attune to your natural state of wholeness. Why? It feels good. And then what? You feel good. Does it matter what happens next?

resistance.

April 11, 2020

Resistance.

It's just a word.

I suppose there are other words that reflect the same meaning, or even more, other words that describe the same feeling.

Resistance is...resisting. Resisting is...‘no’. But it's more than

‘no’. Resisting is not allowing for options, other viewpoints, a different way of thinking, feeling, or doing.

Resistance. No. Closed.

Resistance can be as satisfying, as it is frustrating. We can desire certain outcomes, yet be resistant to the path, the choice, or the next step that helps us move in that direction.

Resistance shuts the valve. Shuts down the flow.

Resistance is not bad. Resistance is an indicator. An internal communication. Your body’s ‘tip’ or ‘hint’ - nudge...clue... - that you have chosen to not move forward, or toward the discomfort.

The intelligence of the nervous system seems mostly involuntary. We are programmed to survive. We fight, flight, freeze, or faint our way in response to any potential threat, danger, or challenge.

The resistance I am talking about is creating a state that voluntarily triggers the stress response. The desire to quit, to say no without considering any other option, to get back into bed when you have already slept for 10 hours, to workout for the third time in a day, to avoid the office or the project, these are all indicators that you could be in a state of resistance.

Can we agree that in situations, circumstances, or events that are truly a threat to our survival, we will respond accordingly?

Resistance is that tight feeling in the gut. Resistance is the sen-



sation of a saturated brain – ‘too much’, overwhelm. Resistance can feel like tears welling up behind your eyes. Resistance can be a form of an adult temper tantrum in response to not wanting to think, feel, or act in a different, or unfamiliar way.

Change creates resistance. Change in routines. Change in what is familiar. Routines and familiarity create a sense of comfort – oddly enough, they create a sense of comfort to the point that a person would stay in a lifestyle that is limiting (not expanding, not growth producing) because it’s familiar.

Living in resistance to change creates a disconnect to our nature. All observable evidence points to growth being inherent to the human condition. If we resist growth by resisting change, we go against our nature. Discomfort then shows up because we are experiencing life in contradiction to our nature. We continue to resist the discomfort. The story we tell about discomfort, is the story that can catapult us into new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are more relevant and life-giving to not just our own experience, but to the advancement of all existence.

Resistance is constant. It won’t go away. It is an indicator. A communicator. It gets our attention and challenges us to focus on next steps and new outcomes.

We can soothe ourselves through resistance by practicing skills, tools, and strategies that allow for an open state. The open state allows one to be okay with not knowing, or uncertainty. In the open state there is a sense of trust, or a knowing, that things work out.

Resisting keeps us the same. Resisting keeps us stuck in patterns that are not allowing for sustainable growth. In (most) cases, doing things the way they have always been done can be an indicator for curiosity – is it really the best way?

School.

Resistant to a new way. Resistance causes headaches. Tears. Stomachaches. Moving toward a new way of doing anything is uncomfortable. And...when there are others who feel the same way, it is easy to find 'like' minds who have the same resistance, and it can feel quite validating. Talking about the resistance, or talking about the problem, may not lead to growth and desirable outcomes. Solutions.

I read something somewhere that resonated. Some version of: A good scientist loves when there is discordance in results because that is where the growth is.

To move toward resistance is accessing an open state. This simple choice to move toward discomfort, with an openness to be curious, is an executive functioning skill called 'initiate'. One can't 'get started' when one is arguing/fighting, going back to bed or the couch, freezing – shutting down or avoiding, or convincing oneself that you are sick, or only focusing on ill feelings.

Moving toward discomfort is what Brene Brown has become famous for analyzing...it can feel a bit vulnerable, and the antidote to the vulnerability is your brand of bravery.

There are three categories of executive function skill sets that I am familiar with: behavior, emotional, cognitive. Executive functions live in our frontal lobe. We cannot access these skillsets when we have an activated stress response.

Behaviors are observable and basically reference a form of impulse control. This has to be relatable to most people or none of us would have what we consider to be 'bad habits'. It's the impulse to respond in a maladaptive way, and the inability to 'divert' the behavior in the moment, and make a more adaptive choice (to eat, to drink, to be mean to yourself or someone else, to engage in harm to self or others...the list goes on). In the moment, there is an inability to resonate with cause and effect. To have that inner space - almost like a time machine - 'if I react to this impulse I am just creating more of the same... my reaction is not going to lead to sustainable results'. The executive function skill is called self-monitor.

Emotional regulation is connected to one's ability to shift or transition - to be flexible and open to changing circumstances, situations, or events. A person who does a good job managing emotions is able to recognize resistance (the skill of self-awareness). Resistance is the inner sensation in response to a change in plans, or expected next steps or outcomes. And then the skill of emotional control is our ability to manage the feelings that can show up in response to the change, or when something doesn't go the way we prefer it to.

Cognitive regulation. Our thinking. Moving toward a task, an expectation, an outcome, begins with the skill of initiation. I can regulate, or manage, my thinking to be curious about this

situation, circumstance, or event that has just presented itself. Resisting the perceived problem moves us back to emotional and behavioral regulation. Managing our thinking allows us to be in charge of the story we are telling.

The story we tell creates a state. A state of what's possible, or a state of what's impossible. An open state of possibility allows us to access the whole of who we are (which is a curious problem solver), and a closed state of impossibility keeps us stuck or spinning in the emotional or behavioral reactivity of the intelligent nervous system - fight, flight, freeze, faint.

We are programmed to move toward discomfort. When we move toward discomfort with a curious state of possibility, we access a broad context of what we know to be true (our working memory), we can create a plan for next steps (first, next, then), we can monitor the plan - change and adjust as needed, and organize our materials in a way that helps us accomplish, or create, a sense of completion. This feels good.

We are always playing out a version of how we respond to discomfort, or unexpected events, situations, circumstances. The discomfort gets our attention. We can make a choice to focus on a preferred outcome (which is best if the outcome is a win-win). And we move toward it.

We are wired for advancement. Staying stuck in the same thinking, that creates the same outcomes, does not lead to sustainable change. Discomfort is a function of existence. It gets our attention. We grow each time we move toward it. When we stay stuck or spinning, our outcomes tend to match

an observable pattern linked to our stress response (a constant fight, constant regression, constant disconnect, or constant pain).

new.

April 18, 2020

Fresh.

A fresh feeling. The feeling after a workout, a long walk, a beautiful hike. Fresh. Rejuvenated. An expansive feeling. A light feeling. Free. Clean. Fresh and clean. Fresh sheets, fresh towel, fresh shower. There's something about that fresh feeling. It's almost as if one has a sense of attainment. I have mastered the task. A reward.

I think for most of my life, that fresh feeling almost felt like a plateau. I did it. It's done. I will never not feel this way. And then...the sheets need to be washed again, it's time for another shower. But...I just did that...I thought I was complete.

Patterns. Cycles. Beginning. Middle. End.

When it comes to our inside world of energy in motion, or emotion, it's the same thing. There is this fresh and balanced way of being, and it feels good. It feels good because it is good. Well-being. A state of being in balance. Not too much, not too little. And we ebb away from it as the variety of life, or the variety of our thoughts, gets our attention. When we get too far away

from its field, we notice the discomfort. Our emotion indicates to us that we have ebbed away from our natural, balanced state. And when we are aware, we turn back toward it and allow it to flow again.

A dance.

The skill of self-awareness allows us to be attuned to the natural ebb and flow of our physical and non-physical existence.

The ebb supports and allows for our growth. It's diverse to humans, to the planet. Different desires. Different preferences. Yet, we all flow in the same source of well-being.

The non physical experience of well-being is felt. It's noticed. The more you bring your attention to it, the more you recognize it. It exists. We tune to it. We allow the experience of it.

When we attune to a balanced state of well-being, we access the whole of who we are. We create our next steps. We create a sense of our desired outcomes. We ponder and reflect on how we desire to show up and express ourselves. The source of well-being is abundant. It can't be limited, but we can limit our access to it. When we get curious about this source, this state, we may stop playing chess with the people in our lives. We may stop calculating our decisions based on how others might respond. Instead, we may make decisions from an intuitive state of knowing. We begin to allow life, and stop pursuing a specific end game that is contingent on how others behave.

Fresh. New.

It seems we have all been placed in quiet time. Will it regulate our inside world? Will we come out more attuned? More inspired?

I think so.

access.

April 26, 2020

Fresh and new.

Are you feeling fresh and new?

Could you feel fresh and new?

What does it take to feel fresh and new?

Do you enjoy feeling fresh and new?

What does it feel like to feel fresh and new?

Fresh thoughts and new ideas. I love the feeling of fresh thoughts and new ideas. When I was getting stuck in cyclical patterns of depression, I would latch onto the feeling of possibility when it showed up. I knew the feeling. I loved the feeling. I knew there was a feeling state inside of me that existed where I felt I could handle anything, and I could be, do, or have anything – I was capable.

The more I noticed that feeling, the more I noticed that it would

show up at random times. I assumed I had to follow very healthy patterns to access that feeling – how much sleep I was getting, eating all the right things, not living in excess of anything. Then the feeling would show up and the ‘rules’ hadn’t been followed, but the feeling still came.

I call the feeling possibility. Maybe I also call it inspiration. It feels so good. The feeling is well-being. Well-being has a lot of language or names to describe it. Mostly – it just feels good. Feeling balanced feels good. Feeling clear feels good. Feeling open feels good.

Allowing yourself to be curious about the state of well-being is a great place to start if you would like to enjoy more control over your access to, and experience of, well-being. Can you notice when you are in an open state? Other words to describe this state could be the feeling of *allowing* and *receiving*. Are you open to being curious? Are you open to having an experience and just allow the experience to be what it is without telling a story that includes a lot of rules? Are you okay with receiving the feeling? Or are you telling yourself that good things aren’t practical? ‘One needs to be very cautious of good things.’ (Deconstruct that. Does it make sense? Is it logical?)

Self awareness can bring you closer to your experience of good feeling states of energy in your body. It can also bring your attention to the story you are telling about the good feeling states.

If you feel stuck, one trick always works for me. I use a very popular prompt from the coaching world: If you could be, do, or



have anything without money, time, or other resources being of issue or concern, what would it be?

If I can catch myself stuck in overwhelm, or what I call ‘saturated’, I ask: what do you want? If this is too much, then what is just right?

The experience of openness and possibility is your end game. You are using your thinking to create and access pathways in your brain that support problem solving and growth. Telling stories and creating a sense of wonder and possibility allows for the essence of well-being to emerge. When you access the state, you let go of attachment to specific outcomes because trust shows up. We all are connected to an intuitive state that allows us to be exactly who we are.

The owner of Kindness Yoga in Denver, Patrick Harrington, always has a nugget of wisdom in his classes. Most recently he referenced something he read: ‘would you use 1% of your time in a day doing something that would make the other 99% more engaging and meaningful?’

Here’s what lands that idea: 1% is 14 minutes.

Would you reflect on how you want to show up and express yourself for 14 minutes if it helped you to align and plan how day looks, feels, and sounds? Would you spend 14 minutes to slow down, and allow an opportunity for your mind to clear and your heart to open? Would you spend 14 minutes practicing a skill, tool, or strategy that supports your access to a more balanced state?

SOMETHING MORE.

Ordinary day...Extraordinary way. Now this is me.

## 5

### beginnings

rhythm.

May 2, 2020

*...a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.*

How would you describe the rhythm of your ordinary day?

How much control do you have over the rhythm of your body?  
heart beat? breath? energy flow? movement?

Is your rhythm one that sets the baseline for others to resonate to, or do you resonate with other, more dominant, forceful rhythms?

Is there a difference between internal rhythm and external rhythm? Is there a preference? Do you feel more balanced, and in control, when you set the tone?

Is there one rhythm? If you think of uni-verse as one song, is there an underbelly that sets the pace, the tone, the vibration of an infinite and eternal rhythm of well-being?

I was listening to a recorded interview on body awareness this week. Renee Jain (creator of GoZen! – social and emotional skill building for kids) interviewed Emiliya Zhivotovskaya (founder of The Flourishing Center in NYC) about calming the body to calm the mind.

The nugget I took away from the interview was simple, and the simplicity instantly shifted my understanding of rhythm, and how it is the resonance of balance and well-being.

Emiliya referenced her experience working with those who are symptomatic of ‘big feelings’ (anxious, depressed, angry, irritable, etc). She said that often they can’t explain how they feel with logical thought, but they can say what it feels like inside their body. So in response to this, she treats the body – where the symptoms are showing up. She uses simple, rhythmic movements to directly soothe the rhythm of energy in the body, and bring it back into balance.

She talked about completing the stress cycle. She says that when we create stress in our minds by the story we tell (often rooted in fear and uncertainty), we don’t complete the cycle of stress – we don’t move the energy/hormones released when the body response is triggered by the mind (think: animals run, fight, tremble or shake, and then resume a balanced state when the threat has passed). That stagnant energy creates symptoms, or discomfort. It needs to be moved.

Subtle, rhythmic movements (this can be as simple as moving breath) create a soothing sensation that is enough to return the cells to a balanced state.

Move. Notice. Is there a shift? Does the story you tell soften and begin to match the beat of your being? If you notice this shift, can you bring intention to create more of this? Why wouldn't you?

Self-Care: Caring about yourself enough to practice skills, tools, and strategies that allow you to access the whole of who you are. It feels good. Why? Because it is good.

***In the organ of the heart, each cell is beating continuously. If we were to dissect the heart, each cell would continue to beat by itself. As soon as we put these cells together with other heart cells (as on a microscope slide), the cells shift their rhythm so that they are pulsating together. They enter a state of rhythmic resonance.***

***By tuning into our heart beat, we tune ourselves into the resonance with the core rhythm of our organism and the rhythm of the world around us.***

***- Wheels of Life, Anodea Judith, Ph.D.***

beginnings.

May 9, 2020

Every ending is a new beginning.

When I chose this theme for May, I was connecting it to the end

of the school year. I was thinking specifically of my niece's high school graduation. Every ending is a new beginning.

I'm not exactly sure when I first started repeating this little phrase, or mantra, to myself. I remember watching the movie Temple Grandin, and being curious about her continuous visual reference to a door. When Temple was in difficult or uncomfortable situations, she imagined a door - and herself opening the door. It created a sense of relief and possibility. Empowerment.

The mantra came in handy when my dog died. I remember going for a walk after I put her down, and repeating to myself over and over, 'every ending is a new beginning'.

It's more than just a mantra for the moment. It definitely works as such...but it's more.

So many cycles. Breath - beginning, middle, end. Day - beginning, middle, end. Seasons - beginning, middle, end. A conversation. A shower. Weather. Cycles are continuous. Constant.

Do you ever wonder about your day and the number of different segments that include a beginning, middle, and an end? A workout. Quiet time. Meals. Work - the segments within the work day. When we reflect on the segments of day, we can be curious about the different ways we show up to the segments. Level of confidence, interest, focus. This is another blog post, but with what intention do we take on day? how much control do we have over how we show up and express ourselves in the differing segments?

I suppose the whole point of this particular post, is that opportunities and growth are continuous and constant. Nothing stays the same. Nothing is meant to stay the same. And then as I type this, I think of what seems to be constant and unchanging. I read an interpretation of the Tao a while back, and the whole concept of 'everything and nothing' made so much sense to me, as nonsensical as 'everything and nothing' can seem.

In January, the theme was self-care. To care about yourself enough to be curious about your thoughts and the story you tell. In February, it was love. Love as a state of being. The story I tell can be one that connects to possibility and well-being. In March, it was anticipation – am I anticipating the next worst thing or the next best thing? Am I telling a story of positive expectancy? In April, fresh and new. Any moment I choose can be a fresh start, a new beginning.

May. Every ending is a new beginning.

The current life situation will end. And then what? What will begin?

Begin to tell the story of what's next. To generalize, my guess is that your favorite athlete, actor, performer, etc began telling the story of what's next as an intuitive response to an adverse situation. You can too.

resist.

May 16, 2020

I love technology.

I love youthful, or new, ideas and ways of interpreting the world. I love disruption. I think disruption is necessary for advancement and sustainability.

Sustainability is a funny word. It seems to mean two things: to keep what is, while adapting to new circumstances, situations, and events. Sustain AND grow (?)

Sweet spot. A balance. Satisfied with what is, while desiring new or different outcomes. More.

My path to this current state of adoration for digital technology was certainly not the most direct route. Technology was new as I was 'coming of age'. Just like anything new, when you avoid it, it doesn't seem to go anywhere. It grows. Technology grew fast. The momentum was a force. Moving in opposition to any powerful force doesn't feel so good.

I created a habit early on when I started paying Derek Snyder to write essays for me in Science Fiction and Fantasy - if I was not interested, there was another way. Anything new - an idea, a way of thinking, an opportunity. Any potential challenge that I didn't find fun or interesting, I resisted.

I resisted technology.



I resisted having a cell phone until I moved to California at age 22. My parents got one for me to use in case of emergency. I resisted email as a norm until I got the message at age 30 that all teachers were to check their email daily. I'm not sure what my attitude was about email, but I can guarantee that I wasn't checking it for anything other than communication with friends who no longer lived nearby. At 32, a male friend suggested I text as a response to me complaining that he didn't call me enough. I didn't listen when first exposed to google docs around 36. I didn't pay attention when coworkers started buying iphones and using apps. It was all too confusing and made my brain hurt. I resisted everything new that felt hard or uncomfortable, and when forced to learn it, I complained. As if complaining could keep me from having to move toward it.

I could cite evidence to the contrary when it came to things that motivated me. For example, when I was motivated to blog is when I learned google docs. When I was motivated to learn everything I could about mindfulness is when I became obsessed with the tech industry. Recently, I heard motivation defined as completing the cycle of beginning, sustaining effort, and completing a task or a goal. We can be motivated by lots of things: power, recognition, attainment of a thing or another person, a desirable feeling. The curious thing about motivation is to compare it to inspiration. Motivation being conditional. Inspiration being unconditional.

Resistance can be a bitch. The sensation of resistance is a constant. To live is to have a constant flow of circumstances, situations, and events that create the perception of a problem. If we tell a story about the problem as a problem - we get stuck in

the problem. For something to be considered a problem, there must be a solution. We get to choose what we focus on. We also get to choose how we want to show up and express ourselves – if we derive meaning from external conditions, or from inspiration – an internal state of being.

We tell a story about our experience of resistance, or discomfort. When we notice resistance, we make a choice. We can be curious about it, and move in the direction of it...or we can resist it. When we resist, we close ourselves off to new possibilities and outcomes. We find ourselves arguing, complaining, sleeping, eating – taking that ‘edge’ off. What if that edge has something for us?

I came up with three skills that can help navigate the experience of resistance. Resistance is not bad. Resistance is an indicator of something. Resistance has a message. The way to discover its meaning is to move toward it. The first step is to recognize it. Discomfort. The next step is to choose to move toward it. I call this onboard thinking: what can you get onboard with? The third step is to choose to be curious. When we choose to be curious about our response to new ideas, opportunities, or ways of thinking, we have entered into our natural ability to problem solve.



results.

May 24, 2020

I once had a random-but-not-random encounter with a woman in Wash Park who had just purchased a coaching business. The name of the coaching program was *Best Year Yet*. The creator of the 'success' formula for *Best Year Yet* was Jinny Ditzler. Jinny was local to Denver, but began her coaching career in London. Jinny contributed her writing more recently to the Huffington Post. Jinny is considered one of the original life coaches. I think the other two main references in her book, *Your Best Year Yet*, included the early work of Stephen Covey and Tony Robbins.

I recently heard that Jinny died. The influence of her book and 'success' formula was lasting, as everything I put on my plan came to be. It's a simple formula.

Jinny's 'why' story is probably what resonated most. Put simply, Jinny had her 'aha' moment in the early days of career when she recognized she was just showing up and doing a job, she was not oriented toward results.

Results.

Growth.

Outcomes.

Lasting.

Sustainable.

I reference 'results' a lot. The inside sensation of feeling 'stuck' or 'spinning' is an indicator that there may be a limiting pattern in place. Limiting patterns continue to create versions of the same undesirable result. The undesirable result is most likely connected to a story (paradigm, mindset, belief) that you are not enough - you are lacking, or insufficient. Something is missing.

The essence of this limiting story, and shifting one's false belief, seems to be the fundamental core of any program, belief system, or organization that facilitates the unveiling of human potential.

Here is the spoiler alert for any personal growth process. Observable conditions are never the problem, and they are never the solution. The juice is in the story we tell about the conditions. As the observer of external conditions, we have the capacity to apply the filter. Most of us are under a false illusion that the

attainment of things, or the adoration of others, is the answer to the dull, or busy, sensation of lack – something is missing and needs to be found.

Nothing is missing. Your skills, talents, and abilities live within you. You have the juice. Juice up your juicy juice by telling the story of what's possible. Possibility is a feeling. To live from an empowered state of possibility is to be attuned to the magic of existence.

June 1 is next Monday. Use this week to create a story of the outcomes you desire on August 1. Leave out no detail. Read the journal entry each day and resonate with the feeling state of positive expectancy and possibility, as if it is happening in real time.

The feeling state of positive expectation and possibility is not a result of conditions. Desirable conditions are the result of the feeling state of positive expectation and possibility. See what happens on August 1.

And then tell another story.

***Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. –***

***Marianne Williamson***

## 6

### possibility

savor.

May 30, 2020

Early this year, I wrote a backstory to this blog. The story was written in two parts. Part one told of a few culminating experiences that lead to my 'aha' moment. Part two shared a bit about my personal journey. The stories were tangled, as all good stories are – so many moving parts and pieces.

The short version of my aha moment was in response to a school year that included two suicide deaths. After receiving the news the second time, I paced my kitchen floor and questioned the silence, 'what do we do?' The answer I received was, 'Life. Sell life.'

The story goes on to tell that I realized I was not alive. I was not living. I had been experiencing a cycle of depression that

would come and go every two weeks, and it had gone on for over a decade. I realized that if I could figure out the skills to get my own life back, then I would know the skills to teach others. The skills that worked. The skills that contributed toward life and sustainable growth. Lasting.

I have been out of the cycle for over three years. What I share in published content is my experience of skills, tools, and strategies that work for me.

This year I gave each month a theme to focus my content. The month of May has been about endings and beginnings. *Every ending is a new beginning.* One of the MANY mantras I have on replay in my mind. When one practices self-awareness, one begins to notice the many daily segments that include endings and beginnings.

Morning routines. Bathing routines. Work routines. Meals. Chores. Exercise. Events. The list goes on and on. Each segment includes a cycle. A beginning and an ending. This is the ordinary experience of life and physical existence.

What makes an ordinary day extraordinary is recognizing, and being present to, the space between.

Insert the magic of slowing down. Insert the magic of attunement. Insert the magic of taking time to calibrate to the essence of one's aliveness. To be fully present allows one to access the whole of their being.

Being. Allowing.

It sounds so simple, doesn't it? The experience of savoring a moment. Noticing, and being present to, the sensual experience of what is happening - to taste, to smell, to feel, to hear, to see. To savor. So much goodness. So extraordinary are the moments when we wake up to what is.

We are the storyteller of what we experience. We apply the filter.

To appreciate something is to give it value. When a home appreciates, it grows in value. When we take the time to appreciate the ordinary, the space between, it appreciates. The space grows. It becomes extraordinary. This is the intended space to live from. The space is likely to inspire action, but it does not require action.

You have a way of being exactly who you are. When you are attuned to it, it feels good. Feeling good is our natural state, that is why it feels good.

This week I heard a reference to the savoring of life like licking an ice cream cone. You don't eat the ice cream cone all at once - what would be the point? You lick it.

change.

June 14, 2020

Racism.

Do you like to understand things in a simple way? A racist is a



person who believes in a superior race. An antiracist is a person who believes in equal value, worth, and dignity of all humans.

According to Ibram Kendi, all persons ebb and flow daily between racist and antiracist thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The practice of self-awareness helps us be aware of our thoughts, which have a tendency to reflect our beliefs, and to disrupt thoughts and beliefs that create an inferior existence of self or other.

Our thoughts tell a story. The story we tell on the inside reflects our experience of what we observe on the outside.

When we tell a story of the powerful and the powerless, we propagate a limiting social narrative that suggests power is external and is based only on what can be observed in the physical world.

We have the power to tell our own story.

Practicing self-awareness allows one to notice and disrupt limiting patterns of thought that are contributing to limiting outcomes. A limiting thought is one that puts limits on what is possible for yourself or another.

Lasting and sustainable growth outcomes contribute to a thriving existence. A thriving existence is the result of recognizing discomfort and moving toward it, knowing that the discomfort is what gets your attention to act in a direction of positive change. Those who thrive feel empowered to change limiting outcomes that are not contributing to life experience.

To exist as a human being, growth is a constant. To resist growth (ie. change) is to resist that which is a natural function of aliveness, of humanness. To believe that there is one absolute way of existing and functioning is disconnected from the nature of cells that form the physical experience. This belief will only result in more of the same. 'Same' is not a sustainable growth outcome. 'Same' does not build on itself. 'Same' may be perceived as comfortable, but it is not beneficial.

Change is uncomfortable. It has to be uncomfortable in order to gain the attention needed to create new outcomes that are more relevant, purposeful, and life-giving for self and other.

trance.

June 20, 2020

I was watching Goop Lab on Netflix. The topic was female sensuality. Gwyneth Paltrow was participating in the discussion. At one point the focus turned toward her, and how harmful it must be to grow up as a sex symbol and feel like you had to perform to a certain level sexually with your partners. She was kind of like, 'yeah...no...not really an issue...because all that is fiction...it's not real...it's easy to separate from it.'

Hold that thought. Let's make another connection to movies and story. Can you connect to the experience of being lost in a story to the point where you forget that you are seated in a movie theater? Whether a book or a movie, can you connect to the experience of being lost in the trance of a story?

Early in my teaching career, I learned five reflection questions. (Link Crew) added song and movement to remember them - it worked.

1. Did you notice?
2. Why does it happen?
3. Does it happen in life? Does it happen in school?
4. Why?
5. How can we use this?

Considering the two examples I shared about fiction (it's not real, easy to disconnect) and the trance of a story (so engaged you disconnect from physical surroundings), can you reflect on your experience of fiction and story using the five questions?

Using a tool to reflect is a way of creating a sense of curiosity. When we can tap into a state of curiosity, we enter into an integrated mind/body state where we become curious problem solvers. When we are in a state that allows us to access a broad view, we see things in a constructive way. When we are not in an integrated space of mind/body, we address events, situations, and circumstances often in destructive ways.

Learning the history of the slave trade (13th Netflix), the origination of policing and capitalism, watching the murders of innocent black men, hearing the accounts of other murders; all this escalates the nervous system. Exposure to new information and horrific live video creates a mixed state of emotion that can include feelings of confusion, anger, powerlessness, guilt (how can this be happening?), embarrassment (for not knowing).

That word. Escalate.

When we disconnect from our shared humanity we may view others' experience as fiction. When we are lost in a trance of story that supports inhumane and cruel acts, we may engage in a script or commentary that is disconnected from the intrinsic value, dignity, worth, and potential of all human life. When we escalate we are in fight, flight, freeze, faint.

De-escalate. To de-escalate is to first be aware of being escalated, or when a situation is escalating. When we recognize the cues our body gives us, we can choose to soothe our response, and return to balance (integrated mind/body) which includes a natural sense of a shared humanity.

Nature functions as an integrated whole. The cells in our body function as an integrated whole. When external forces mess with nature, or body cells, the result is not good. Is society meant to be different than nature and the cellular system?

What if we got curious about our internal experience of feeling escalated, and what it is like to apply skills, tools, and strategies to de-escalate and return to an integrated mind/body (balanced) state? What if we practiced and could apply the practice to external situations, circumstances, and events in our families, work environment, and community?

What if we got good at recognizing what is helpful to recognize as fiction, and what is necessary to validate and move toward for better results? What if we got good at recognizing what it's like to be caught up in a trance of story that perpetuates harm

to self or other?

What if we tell the story? What if we create the trance?

If so, what do we desire to create? Would it cause harm to self or other?

I don't think so.

I'd like to share a link to a course that I integrated into a book. There are three parts to the book which you can read about in the preface. Part three includes a few simple skills, tools, and strategies that can help you get curious about the story you tell, and how to disrupt stories that limit self or other. (see *Also by Sally Seiffer* at the end of this book)

power.

June 27, 2020

Is policing the only system that needs change? Is policing the only system whose process may seem antiquated and not relevant in 2020? Is policing the only system falsely represented through media outlets, particularly television and movies, greatly influencing public perception?

I have worked in the school system my entire adult life. Prior to working in the system, I was influenced by the system beginning at five years old.

As a school social worker, I have involvement with social systems. As a human, I have observed and engaged in conversations of person's experience with human or social services.

Medical system? Political system?

This post is not going to complain about systems. My blog is based on my mission, to create and share content that allows adults and children to feel seen, heard, valued, and understood. My desire is to write from a space of empowerment and possibility, rather than a place of 'pushing against'. When we spend our time pushing against a perceived enemy, it can feel good. But. It often results in more of the same.

When I first began blogging, my inspiration often came from wanting to prove a point. I realized that if my motivation to write and share was fueled by some level of anger, then I was only going to attract others who felt the same way. It can be validating to read or listen to someone complain in a compelling way, but it doesn't lead to growth outcomes.

Judgement, comparison, and criticism can tip us off to when we have given our power over to 'other'. 'Other' can be defined as anything outside of ourselves that is perceived to be responsible for our level of 'joy'. (ex. "Are you enjoying yourself?" the guest was asked. "No. The food is cold." - does food have the power to influence your level of joy? Or is it the story you tell about the food?)

Pushing against 'other' can make for great conversation and dialogue. It just does not lead to new outcomes that sustain

themselves and evolve. I suppose that is not totally true – it may be the difference between flowing downstream, or continuing to push upstream...somehow believing that the fight against the stream is the most effective way to get results.

When one is pushing against another person, idea, or system, the person, idea, or system has to exist, otherwise there is nothing to push against. The pushing against creates a game. The game must include a winner or a loser. It never ends.

Self-awareness allows one to recognize when they are outside of personal power. Personal power lies in choice – if you aren't aware of patterns that result from allowing 'other' the power, then you are unaware of your ability to choose next steps. Next steps can include taking a break, slowing down, or recognizing when it's time to consider a new perspective.

It's so easy to allow others to do the thinking. We can be indoctrinated into believing that others are in charge. Others will tell us what to do. Often we believe that there is some other who is going to take care of things.

This paradigm of 'other' is being disrupted. The disruption may bring us back to the guidance system within. Intuition.

Visualize a sphere with a center. For the sphere to hold its shape, there has to be tangential forces at work. Tangential forces are an energetic push-pull. Buckminster Fuller designed domes that represent this force; they have been compared to the structure of a cell, the structure of the planet.

The sphere has a center. The center is the source of power. Where does the power come from? What activates it? Is the source a creative force? Is the force, or power, exclusive to some and not to other?

As a school social worker, I get curious about emotions and how they play into a student's experience of school. Emotion. Energy in motion. When energy isn't flowing (ie. stuck or spinning), it results in observable 'problematic' behavior.

Each living thing has a center. A force. When we tell a story that this force, this power, exists outside of ourselves - it results in observable behavior that diminishes present moment experience, rather than contributes to and uplifts present moment experience.

Slow down to observe your patterns of thought. Be a witness to the experience of energy in motion within you. Notice your power within.



# 7

## play

freedom.

July 4, 2020

There is nothing quite like a contentious topic such as freedom to piss people off. Freedom. Does it make sense that anyone would not be free? It's interesting that this idea sparks fear - if everyone was free, I/others would not be safe (?)

Wow. The thought of freedom provokes fear. This seems a bit problematic. Freedom and fear - what a duel. I wonder which is winning right now.

While I do believe that until everyone is free, no one is free; the focus of this blog is freedom within.

STuFfeD (slow the fuck down): self-care 101. Caring about yourself enough to notice the thoughts you think. The thoughts

you think create the story you tell. Do your thoughts tell a story of freedom and possibility, or do your thoughts hold you captive? Do you have the freedom to change your thinking? Do you have the freedom to tell your own story?

Noticing your thoughts and choosing to create a story of possibility is as free as it gets. The power to tell your own story is liberating. Freedom is a state, an expansive energy. Feeling a sense of freedom and possibility feels good. Why? Because it is good. It's natural to attune to, and resonate with, the infinite source of freedom. The energy source that permeates through all life and existence.

Do you question and wonder about the intelligence of your smartphone? Do you question and wonder about the inner workings of your cellular system to keep you breathing? Do you question and wonder about the integral parts at play that allow you to attune to the physical aspects of what you perceive to be your reality?

Do you accept your freedom to wonder about ANYTHING? Or do you hold yourself captive and limit your capacity to create, to dream, to allow, to let go.

play.

July 11, 2020

Do you have moments in your day where another person (most likely a 'stranger' or someone you aren't familiar with) says or

does something that gets your attention, and fills you with good feelings?

I am a sucker for 'sweetie'.

Last night, I was ordering a pizza and the person who was making the salads (next to where I was ordering) was offering her commentary on my order. At first, I wasn't sure she was commenting on my situation. Then it became apparent when she validated the vegan cheese with an accentuated 'ooooohhhh' that came with a slow shake of the head, side to side, smiling simultaneously to herself and to me (all while focused on the salad she was creating for some fortunate soul who would ingest her love vibe).

I loved her. I wanted to climb over the counter and squeeze her. I got 'sweetie'. I got 'oh girl'. I got 'you have a nice day now'. Something about this woman was so happy. So genuine. It wasn't overdone. It wasn't necessarily intentional, as much as it was on some level. She was just happy and engaged in the moment. There was nothing separate between she and I. We were actors for the moment in the same scene. Effortless joy.

The theme I chose for July (back in December) was Adventure. I had added the words 'play' and 'enjoy' in parenthesis above a capitalized *Adventure* on my 'post it' for the month.

It seems as we humans age (speaking from my own perspective growing up white in a developed country) we lose our sense of play. Play may even be considered childish, or lacking in responsibility.

Kindergarten gave me my 'play' back.

When I finally had enough of the limiting, hamster wheel outcomes in my job situation, and began splitting my role between schools to intentionally focus on facilitating social and emotional learning (SEL), I found myself in front of 25 five and six year olds for thirty minutes every week.

Nothing scared me more at the time than the teacher leaving the room.

I just wanted to facilitate SEL. Until that school year, I had never worked at the elementary level. The first day I showed up, I wanted to apologize for my selfishness in asking to split my contract between schools that landed me in this position where I was wholly inexperienced, and unfit for the role.

I was so passionate about SEL that I would ask the teachers if I could come in to their classrooms and teach lessons. I had no lesson plans when I asked. I just had a broad belief that early intervention would shift the later outcomes that I had been experiencing at the high school level.

The day I put myself in a position where I had to sing, was the day I got my play back.

The Kindies still scared the shit out of me for the next two or three years, but like anything with practice, Kindie and First grade classrooms became my favorite. One cannot engage five and six year olds without tapping into the sensory experience. In school speak, this is called design thinking.

Play.

What do you see? (color, texture, lines, dimension) What do your hear? (loud, soft, fast, slow, high, low) What do you feel? (too much, not enough, just right, busy, fast, open, closed) What do you taste? (sour, sweet, hard, soft, wet, dry) What do you smell? (nothing, everything, clean, dirty, fresh, stale)

You want to experience the essence of life, living, and pure aliveness? Go to where life is. Go to the children. Watch. Be curious.

It's magical.

I knew if I could create the structure of a lesson that included Movement, Breath, and Kindness (under the umbrella of imagination and play) that I could keep the kids engaged. I also knew they held the magic.

If I brought the structure, the kids would uplevel anything I had for them. The key was to let go of control, and allow the wisdom inherent in kids and play to show up. I would get giddy when they would contribute their own understanding through words, questions, ideas, interpreted movement - often completely opposite of what I intended. I got giddy because of course it was fun, but they were doing the work - they made a 'good enough' lesson GREAT...and often times even better than that.

Children are resource rich with their imaginations and natural, organic, intuitive design to play.

The design doesn't go anywhere as we age, it just gets buried.

Shift perspective. Get curious about youth. Youth culture. Wild. Carefree.

See what magical treasures they have for you.

adventure.

July 21, 2020

***adventure - an unusual and exciting, typically hazardous, experience or activity.***

Hazardous?

- defined as risky, dangerous

(So) what you're saying is: for a circumstance, situation, or event to be considered an adventure, it must contain an element of risk or danger?

Hm.

who is on board?

Does the story you tell (your overriding thoughts that stem from your beliefs - what you believe to be true) suggest that life is something that happens to you, or that life is something that happens for you?

The difference between the two attitudes/beliefs/mindsets is the difference between living from a state of fear, or living from a state of possibility.

Fear triggers the stress response.

Possibility triggers the relaxation response.

Okay. That sounds lame. Who can really live from a state of relaxation, there is no action in that.

Relaxation is just a word so let's not get too hung up on it.

The relaxation response is the opposite of the stress response. The vagus nerve is stimulated rather than fight, flight.

When we can relax our response we integrate mind, body, heart, spirit - we access the whole of who we are. Our minds become more clear, ideas open up to us, our natural instinct is to problem solve and assume a broader perspective exists even if it isn't readily apparent.

If adventure (life) creates a sense of risk, or danger - wouldn't that automatically trigger the stress response?

Are you ready for the answer (?)

Our truest self is the noticer.

When we notice the response (am I perceiving a potential danger? do I feel threatened? challenged?) - we recognize our

power. The power of interpretation. The meaning we place on what we perceive. The power to choose a response – perhaps to be curious, rather than react on impulse. The power to choose the next step.

The next step is often the next thought. And then the next thought.

Our thoughts tell a story. The story creates a feeling – an energetic state. Energy is not stagnant. Energy moves. Energy in motion.

Emotion.

Do emotions happen to us?

When we observe, witness, notice emotion – who is in charge?

When we observe, witness, notice (OWN) our experience, we can lead it.

Leader. Executive. Boss.

When we are in charge of our inside world, we can execute next steps.

Skillset: self-awareness (noticing how one responds to a situation, circumstance, or event – is it perceived to be a potential danger? threat? challenge?)

When you OWN your response, you have WON the opportunity



to choose. Being in a state of choice is powerful. Having choice is empowering.

An empowered human recognizes their natural ability to choose the thoughts they think. An empowered human recognizes that they tell their own story. An empowered human cares about their own self enough to disrupt storylines that are limiting, promote fear, and suggest that life is something that happens TO us - and we must protect ourselves from it at all cost, rather than telling a story that life happens for us.

In a school setting I used to work in, I would often ask the students: how does life know itself? how does life experience itself?

I'd then give the answer: it knows itself through your ears - you choose what you hear. It notices itself through your eyes - do you see beauty and possibility, or fear and scarcity? It notices itself through your senses.

Do you think life wants to enjoy itself? How does it do that?

What story do you tell?

What adventure are you on?

***“The greatest victory is that which requires no battle.”  
(make an enemy of no one)***

enjoy.

July 25, 2020

Months ago, I listened to someone (podcast most likely...brene brown most likely) reference what was apparently a popular Insta post at one time. The conversation I was listening to went something like: “you know that post that was on Insta for a long time, the one where there was a person with a full cup of coffee who got bumped and was shocked that coffee spilled out?”

A person with a full cup of coffee gets bumped and is stunned when coffee spills out.

I may have messed up the expression of the original meme...but the point of the meme is what stuck with me. The point of the meme had to do with human behavior and experience. Whatever it is that we fill ourselves up with is what eventually spills out when we get ‘bumped’.

Make sense? (think anger. think resentment.)

Our thoughts and feelings run the show. Period.

The way we think about ANYTHING fuels our relationship to it, and/or our relationship with it.

I think it is called *dueling consciousness* when we think and feel one way on the inside, but act, accommodate, and allow for the

opposite experience to continue or take place on the outside.

On a side note, I heard the term ‘dueling consciousness’ in Ibram Kendi’s popular book, *How to be an Antiracist*. I assumed it was a broad term rooted in psychology. I just googled the term to make sure I was using it correctly, and Ibram’s book came up along with earlier work from W.E.B. Dubois.

I posted Dubois’s full definition of Double Consciousness on my FB page (@sallysifer). It’s rich.

I love the term ‘dueling consciousness’ and I think most of us find it relevant to our personal experience. By using this term in a self-care blog, I do not mean to minimize white privilege and the broader context of Dubois and Kendi’s antiracist work for social equity. My voice is small (related to number of followers and social media influence) but my white privilege is not.

Back to getting bumped and whatever we fill ourselves up with spills out. (and yes, totally related to privilege and social equity).

Self-Care.

Caring about yourself enough to notice the thoughts you think.

Considering the amount of energy it takes to think and feel one way on the inside and express yourself in opposition DAILY, can you recognize how this can make someone not well (sick)? Whether it is anxiety, depression, headaches, anger, addiction, isolation, etc. Can you see how living in opposition of your truth is simply not healthy? It’s not whole. It’s split.

Living this opposition does not only ‘bump out’ sickness. When we live this ‘unexamined life’, we perpetuate limiting, and quite harmful, social narratives that contribute to an unhealthy society.

This is not good. We can do better.

Wellbeing. Life is meant to be enjoyed, and it is meant to be enjoyed now. Today. And yes. you. can.

The title of this blog is *enjoy*. I thought it was going to start by me claiming that the word ‘joy’ was a little too fluffy for me. My context for this lackluster interpretation of ‘joy’ was working with students who were really in horrible life circumstances, and the word ‘joy’ seemed a bit of a stretch as to where I was ‘meeting them at’.

I began to like the word when I put the ‘en’ in front. ‘Enjoy’ had more of a sensory sort of relatability. No matter what your external circumstances, there are still things that are ‘enjoyed’ daily and often. For example (using the student experience): “do you enjoy playing videogames?” (yes) “what does it feel like on the inside when you are playing videogames?” - now we can at least access and connect to an internal, sensory/felt experience of joy.

If we can practice noticing ‘joy’ and noticing what the inside experience is like when we are enjoying something, we can begin to create more of it (if this is the desire). If we can intentionally use our thoughts to create the sensation of joy and enjoyment, guess what spills out when bumped?

Can you see where self-care originates? If you don't care about yourself enough to feel good, then there is no next step. If you decide that you do care about yourself, the practice of self-awareness (mindfulness) is a perfect next step. Once you begin to practice self-awareness, you begin to notice your inside, or nonphysical, world of feelings, impulses, thoughts, and sensations (FITS).

You notice the splits. You notice the duels. Noticing gives you the power to make choices that allow for integration. Alignment. Balance. An empowered person is the noticer. An empowered person notices discomfort and moves toward it. An empowered person is NOT fragile. You are not FRAGILE.

Stop it.

PS. I recognize that I bring up a lot of big ideas in my blog posts. I created a YouTube channel specifically to share simple and transferable skills, tools, and strategies that support 'a better way' - or *how to* take a next step toward self-awareness and disrupting limiting mind scripts.

## 8

### good

good.

August 1, 2020

*What if* today is your favorite day?

What if every day you wake up and exclaim, 'today is my favorite day!' – and you embody that sentiment as a feeling state that vibrates within your every cell. (do you know a child or pet who lives like this? #fouryearolds #puppies)

*What if* every conversation is your favorite conversation? And the person/s with whom you are conversing is/are your favorite person/s to converse with? (do you know someone who shares this type of animation when you talk with them? – #scottroane)

*What if* you live today as if there is a fun surprise waiting for you at any moment?

Today is August 1. The theme chosen for August is ‘What if good?’ You can probably guess what this means. Rather than perpetuating the unexamined, dare-I-say CONSTANT, ‘what if bad’ mantra, can you use your awareness and personal power to allow for, or be curious about, the possibility of a new ‘what if...good’ mantra? *(I think I originally got this idea listening to an interview with Joe Vitale about one of his books).*

When I catch a negative thought early enough I can shift it by challenging it with, ‘what if that’s not true?’, or ‘what if it was different?’ I have also learned to recognize limiting ‘scripts’ and challenge them by creating an alternative script. I have a vivid recollection of the day I started doing this. It was early morning on a Friday. My mind story did NOT want to go to work. I caught it, and shifted the script by using my imagination to create what I would prefer to be doing. Rather than getting caught up in a negative/limiting thought process, I created a fun, uplifting, energizing ‘story’. The power is in recognizing ‘choice’, and the inherent ability to create (to create your own thoughts, new outcomes, ideas, visions, etc). The new story energized me and filled me with the feeling of possibility. I took that feeling state into the day. Was I the only one who benefited? (hint: I work with children.)

When you begin to practice noticing your thoughts, you begin to recognize your own resistance to positive outcomes. Have you ever heard the saying, ‘get out of your own way’? It’s relevant here.

Any time you ‘flip the script’, the ‘blurt’ may show up reminding you of why the ‘good stuff’ isn’t available to you. *(I’ll reference*

*The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron for this nugget of truth). The 'blur' is the nagging inner voice that tells you why you should NOT consider new ways of thinking and being, rather than why you should. The 'blur' finds its comfort in same - whether good or bad, it prefers what is familiar.

Self-care. Caring about yourself enough to notice your thoughts and the story you tell. Practicing self-awareness reminds you that who YOU are is the noticer.

When you notice the 'blur' you can flip the blur. This is the difference between looping into a limiting script that keeps you stuck and spinning in 'same', and merging into the script you are writing as you tell a story that resonates with the desires of your heart.

Sustainable growth outcomes are a continuous merging onto the highway of infinite possibility. Limiting outcomes keep you stuck or spinning in the roundabout. Wouldn't it suck to be in the roundabout and not even realize it? Have you ever read/seen Dr Seuss' *The Zax*?

The cool thing about practicing *self-care 101* is that no one needs to know. You can create your own curiosities and examine your own inside world all on your own, in your own time, and in your own way. When you notice (examine) your own thinking that is creating outcomes that are not satisfying, you can choose to disrupt the cycle and tell a story that feels better. Listen for the blur that may suggest it is not 'right' to desire to feel better. Does that make any sense?



Uh. No.

PS. Last week I began a YouTube channel to share visual content. The videos complement the blog with simple and transferable skills, tools, and strategies that can be implemented into your daily self-care practice. The skills, tools, and strategies are intended for you first, but they can be easily transferred to those you influence as a parent, teacher, mental health provider, or life coach.

outcomes.

August 8, 2020

Yesterday I was at the park. The day before that I was also at the park. And the day before that, and before that. Good, bad, or indifferent, one might not realize there is a global pandemic happening while at Wash Park in Denver.

There is a 2 mile plus paved loop around the park. It is essentially a road. It's split in half - one side for 'walkers' and the other side for 'bikers' (or anything with wheels - homemade contraptions, razor scooters, roller skates, etc).

Yesterday I happened to be walking on the paved loop (as opposed to the peripheral dirt path). A little girl was on her little bike on the bike side. She had on a helmet, a dress, closed toe velcro shoes, and an expression reflecting both the confidence and focus of someone who recently learned how to ride a bike.

I noticed her as she was riding toward me. I heard her mom from behind yell to her that turning around was not an option. She needed to stick to one direction. The next time I notice her she is ahead of me on the ground, next to the curb, on the walking side. She is not crying but she obviously fell. Her brother is on the grass - full crash gear. He is a few years older and wearing the expression of the master. Not only does he know how to ride a bike. He knows how to ride a bike over the curb.

I keep walking. And then the whole episode repeats itself. She is on the ground again. Obviously having difficulty getting over the curb. What struck me about this was - well, the whole dynamic was funny because there is always the road cyclist who treats the paved loop like it's a velodrome, and on this late morning there was a pack of at least eight who had whizzed by when this little girl attempted to ride back toward her mom who was obviously enjoying a conversation and walk with her friend as she directed her kid to go in the other direction...and of course the helmet is too big for the kid's head.

What I had the opportunity to observe, was a kid having her own experience. She was 0 for 2 in getting over the curb. Yet she was undeterred. You could see it in her face. Both times she was on the ground, rubbing her knees, bike down - the look on her face more curious and inquisitive then anything else. She seemed genuinely surprised and a bit perplexed as to why she couldn't get over the curb. She also appeared to be listening and engaged with her brother who was on the grass side as he had easily mastered the curb. In his confidence, he was validating his sister that she would figure it out. It's hard at first.

Outcomes.

For several weeks I have been thinking about outcomes.

As it relates to one's own life, how important is it to be curious about your own desired outcomes?

The little girl had a desired outcome. To get over the curb. She fell down twice. It didn't matter. She knew her end game.

My 'School Sally' observation (over the years) of kids who play videogames is that they will incessantly move toward their desired outcomes. Often they want to beat a level. They will watch gamers play videogames to learn how to beat the level. They will apply what they learn. They will have focused and engaging conversations with others about games.

I learned to do this thing with my emotions where I chip away at my own desired emotional outcomes. For example, if I hear about someone who takes a trip. At first I may compare, 'I want to go on that trip.' If I don't catch myself here I will find myself in a losing game of Chutes and Ladders where I can be at the top and then I land on the chute that takes me back to the beginning. If I connect going on a trip, to what I get paid, to the school system, to what others get paid, I can spin into a diatribe of negative thoughts and feelings in an instant. But then what? Fortunately, I have learned how to mostly avoid the chute because I know when I engage in certain thinking it just doesn't get me the emotional outcomes that I want.

Can you notice the difference between thoughts and feelings

that resonate with desired outcomes, and thoughts and feelings that resonate only with real time, observable 'reality'?

If we don't take the time to consider desired outcomes, we may find ourselves stuck or spinning in the same outcomes because we haven't taken time to consider another way.

Martin Seligman created a set of outcomes to measure happiness. PERMA. His research demonstrated happiness to be a measure of: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. I would interpret achievement as growth.

When we practice self-awareness we may notice observable outcomes that we can translate with our physical senses as what is perceived to be real time. We can also notice how we are responding to what we observe. Do we have a choice in how we respond? Do we have a choice in how we perceive what is happening in real time? Does having a desired outcome support the way we experience 'real time'?

This concept is confusing to articulate in written expression. It is a felt experience. Life is an evolution. We are 'coded' to continually evolve. Conditions are impermanent. Life is fluid and everchanging.

As always, there is the sweet spot. Recognizing both the what is and the what can be, and our relationship to it. Allowing both. One creating opportunity for the other. Growth.

enlightenment.

August 15, 2020

Over the years that I have been intentionally practicing ways to manage my inside world, I can remember random moments of 'enlightenment'. Early on (and only up to maybe this last year) I was certain that each one of these 'enlightenment' experiences was going to be it. Each time I was convinced I now knew all the magic and have mastered the universe. I was certain moving forward would be smooth sailing.

I'm not sure of the name...Quantum something...of one of the first 'enlightenment' books I bought in the Target book section. Actually, it might have been Quantum Nutrition (?), I know Eckart Tolle's *A New Earth* was one of my originals. I did not understand these books at first, and I never finished reading them. As for *A New Earth*, the second time I picked it up a few years and experiences later (reread during the infamous Breckenridge summer) - it was like candy to me.

When I took this first step toward a new perspective for better personal outcomes, I was living across from a gorgeous reservoir that had the perfect dirt trail for running. Prior to my 'enlightenment', when I would go for a run my goal was to space out. My outcome for the run was for when it was over, to not even realize I had done it. Turn. Off. Mind. Chatter. I would brag about how I could go for a run and not remember the run. For the record, this is the exact opposite of mindfulness.

I remember the day I went for a run after I began reading one of

the two books I mentioned. I had a moment where I was ‘aware’ that I ‘noticed’ a wild flower along the side of the path. I was so stoked because 1. It actually was cool to notice. It was like something coming into focus for the first time. And 2. I really thought that was the lagging skill. I thought I had mastered what had been missing that led to the cyclical depression that wouldn’t go away. I really thought I was done. I got it.

In truth, this was a step. That led to the next step and so on. And at every step I really thought I had achieved what was missing. It was only this year that I realized nothing was missing. To live is to grow. It’s the story that we tell about the ‘gap’ that can shift the way we see our day-to-day experiences and how we relate to conditions (situations, circumstances, and events).

During remote learning in the spring, I purchased an online social-emotional program called GoZen! (the exclamation point is part of the title – although I do feel very exclamation-pointy about the program). One of the curriculums in the program was specifically for panic attacks. I liked this program because it included short animated videos with fun, likeable characters that captured student’s attention AND was relevant and ‘up-to-speed’ with current social and emotional research-based content (it’s not so easy to stay relevant and up-to-speed with ANYTHING in 2020).

One of the lessons for managing panic attacks was to generalize the symptoms. For example, if one of the symptoms of a panic attack is fear and a racing heart beat, would you also feel fear and a racing heartbeat ON PURPOSE when you watch a scary movie that you are actually enjoying? Using this generalization,

are you able to manage the symptoms/feelings?

By the way...a quick insert: EVERYONE IS MANAGING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC RIGHT NOW. No one has the exact answer on how to manage anything. To think you should know can contribute to crazy-making.

Perhaps applying this 'generalizing' to some of the feelings that are showing up and not going away could be helpful. Let's see here...what feelings might be showing up: uncertainty, isolation, unexpected outcomes, lack of structure, fear of the unknown, some level of risk and/or danger. And that's the pandemic. We can add the 'can't hide from it now' racial tension and political disruption.

One feeling I can personally generalize is isolation. Intentional isolation is what allowed me to ultimately learn the skills that got me back on board to 'living' life as opposed to just surviving life. It seems another topic that can be general is competitive sports. Most people can get 'on board' with the experience of competitive sports. What game is not filled with some level of intentional uncertainty and unexpected outcomes?

I am working on coming up through the middle and being curious about 'the other side' when it comes to racial tension and political disruption. I found myself strongly leaning to a side and pushing against another side. I also found myself quite ignorant and uninformed about topics that I have had access and opportunities to learn more about, but chose not to. I am choosing differently now. Pushing against ANYTHING only creates more of the same - if it didn't, there wouldn't be

anything to push against.

I like the thinking: rather than pushing against what you don't want, can you focus on being pulled toward what you do want? As human organisms ourselves, we are coded for homeostasis. Balance. Equilibrium. We are also coded to adapt to our environment.

I want to find the balance between telling my own story and inspiring others to do the same, AND be curious about what is contributing to polarizing societal trends. I wonder how I can contribute toward meaningful disruption to benefit the whole of humanity.

day.

August 22, 2020

In June 2002, I moved to Southern California for the second time. In August, days before the school year began, I got a job teaching Behavioral Health at Hemet high school in Hemet, California.

Health class in both Illinois and California was one semester. In Hemet, I taught five classes a day. I showed certain videos that I would view ten times a year. I still have lines memorized from my favorites.

One favorite was Surviving High School. It was a 'news report' that followed a diverse group of students from northern-ish California (Yuba City high school). The students were exposed to



a variety of ‘real life’ experiences. The intention was to expand their general perceptions, and to connect to one another through proximity and shared experience. The students were tasked to return to their high school and lead a program called Challenge Day with the diverse student body. The desired outcome was a more integrated and inclusive school environment. A few hot topics included bullying, gang violence, and suicide.

The school shootings in Jefferson County, Colorado happened in April 1999. If I recall correctly, this teen experience was being filmed concurrently to the school shootings. The teen experience wrapped up with a visit to Columbine high school. The overall experience culminated in the Yuba City high school gym.

The Hemet high students were always captivated by the 80 minute video that we would watch over two class periods. I cried each time I watched, as did a number of the students. Inevitably, several of the responses I would hear were ‘can we do that here?’, and ‘that would never happen here’.

Challenge Day.

If you have attended a Challenge Day as a student, teacher, staff, or parent, you know the emotional experience it evokes. It’s powerful.

I think it was 2015-ish when I attended my first Challenge Day at Grant Beacon middle school in Denver. I had been connected by a friend to a nonprofit organization that raised money to host Challenge Day in Denver public schools. As a person involved

with the nonprofit, I had the opportunity to attend an adult workshop offered to the donors that was facilitated by Rich and Yvonne Dutra St John, founders of Challenge Day. Rich and Yvonne were celebrity status for me as I had watched them over and over on Surviving High School.

I attended several Challenge Days with students, as well as two adult workshops. Always just as powerful and emotionally exhaustive (in a good way).

Several things struck me as a result of these experiences.

1. In the adult workshops, the adults were not processing their current experience. Adults were processing the experiences they had growing up – family, community, school. They may have ‘presented’ with current physical/mental health, relationship/family ‘issues’ – but what came up in the workshops were deeply seeded emotions that were a result of earlier life experiences that had never been examined and disrupted – until that day.
2. It was well over a decade past my first viewing of Challenge Day. The program was still every bit as relevant and powerful.

Number two is what drives my ‘day’.

ordinary day...extraordinary way.

Challenge Day is a powerful program. To my knowledge and experience, there is no school social-emotional program as ‘challenging’, effective, and real as this program.

Why is it that such a powerful program grounded in raw exposure to a shared humanity is as relevant twenty years later. Does it reflect growth or more of the same?

I wonder about the ultimate sustainable growth outcome of a program like Challenge Day. It seems it would be to eradicate itself - it would phase out and no longer be relevant as the effects of the program would shift experiences and grow momentum moving forward.

What about this idea of 'more of the same'? Is that a goal? Is there a way to be that once was and the goal is to return to it and stay there?

I met Candi CdeBaca at the adult workshop with the Dutra-St Johns. At the time, she was running a nonprofit called Project VOYCE. Candi is now a council member for district 9 in Denver.

There is something about Candi. She is smart. She is confident. She is unafraid.

Here is Candi's wikipedia bio: CdeBaca was born in Swansea, a neighborhood of Denver between rail lines and the Interstate 70. As a teenager, she came home one day to find her mother stuck in the street, unable to maneuver her wheelchair over a ramp-less curb. This experience led her to become an activist. In 2006, she co-founded Project VOYCE (Voices of Youth Changing Education), in response to the closure of her school, and helped to organize a class-action lawsuit against Denver Public Schools. CdeBaca was valedictorian and class president at Manual High School, and a first-generation high school graduate. Eventually,

she earned bachelor's and master's degrees simultaneously from the University of Denver, then left for Washington D.C., to work in education advocacy. She returned to Denver in 2014, and once again became involved in local politics.

I wonder about Candi growing up. I wonder if when Candi grew up she interpreted her environment and experiences in a way that allowed for a sense of 'what do I have to lose?'; whereas another person in another set of circumstances and experiences may unknowingly grow from a sense of 'I have everything to lose.'

Everyone has different ways of experiencing their life. We also all have our own ancestral codes that contribute to how we experience whatever it is we experience.

I wonder what it would be like to have the real time experience of 'day' living from a fully integrated belief that resonates with a mindset of 'today I have everything to gain', v. 'today I have everything to lose'.

Are these two mindsets and their opposition part of the polarization that is so visceral right now?

How much control does one have in their experience to create and live from the essence of possibility, rather than living from the essence of fear?

Does living from a state of possibility about 'what could be' create a different sense of present moment experience when compared to living from a state of fear about 'what could be'?

Self-care. Caring about yourself enough to be curious about your inside world. What story do you tell? Is it rooted in a sense of scarcity and fear? Is it rooted in a sense of abundance and possibility?

You may have a substantiated reason for your fear stance. But then what? Where do you go from there?

## allow

system.

August 29, 2020

Often I catch myself in the momentum of a thought stream I am sharing via social media and I am reminded that the ideas I am most adamant about hold truths for me. When I catch it, I slow down to wonder about why I am so focused on the particular lesson, concept, or idea. Why does it have my attention, what is it that I need to understand and apply to my own life experience?

I'm glad that I can catch it, because I know I am the only one I have any control over. If my objective is to change others it doesn't work. The energy gets weird. If I am curious and desire to share from an inspired space, it's all good. There's no attachment to any particular outcome, it's just a fun hobby that I am pulled toward.

Systems are interesting. Systems hold a lot of momentum. Systems are easy to push against because it can feel impersonal. Fictional. Inanimate.

It was maybe four years ago in the middle of a school year that I caught the momentum of a message I was focused on. And by 'focused on', I might mean 'obsessed with'.

I wondered why I was so passionate about this idea of 'pushing against'. I saw it so clearly in leadership. It's so easy to be in a space of judgment of the person who is in front of you all the time – the one leading the meetings, making the decisions, having the 'power' presumably.

Because I caught myself in the momentum of this idea when we 'push against' something we create more of it, I was able to turn it toward me. Leading up to this realization, I assumed I was innocent. It was those in charge responsible for the stuck and powerless energy I was experiencing.

And then the light came on. By judging those in power over me, and the power over that power, and so on, I was pushing against an elusive, top-down system. The school system.

The school system was responsible for school violence. The school system was responsible for problematic behavior in the buildings. The school system was boring and outdated and created the problems. The school system was responsible for student death by suicide.

Because I was pushing against the system and holding it re-

sponsible for the problems I faced in my job, guess what I kept proving? Let's just say that the evidence I needed to prove my stance never failed to present itself.

I felt so justified in fighting the system. This way I didn't have to name a living, breathing human as responsible, or as a problem. And I didn't get to be the problem either. I was a good person who saw the good in others, no one was at fault, no one was to blame. It was the system.

When one 'pushes against' anything it will never let you down. You will forever be right that it exists.

The opposite of 'pushing against' is being 'pulled toward'. When we notice the energy and momentum of 'pushing against' we can be curious. The energy of 'pushing against' will undoubtedly include an element of judgement, comparison, or criticism.

Knowing what it is we are pushing against allows us an opportunity to be curious about what we desire more of, what it is we are pulled toward.

If I am angry at a school system because I feel it is not relevant, what is it I desire? I desire to be 'up to speed'. To be part of something that gets desirable results. To be part of sustainable growth outcomes that build on themselves.

If I don't like to feel powerless and the energy in my body feeling stuck, and/or spinning out of control, then my desire is to feel empowered. I like to focus on things that allow my energy to flow. I like to feel in control of my thoughts and feelings.



Catching ourselves pushing against, gives us an opportunity to be curious about what we are pulled toward.

One energy is moving upstream (fighting the current), and the other is downstream (flowing with the current). One keeps you stuck or spinning in more of the same, the other allows a sense of possibility and positive change.

When we care about how we feel we orient ourselves toward the flow of energy that feels good. It feels good because it is good.

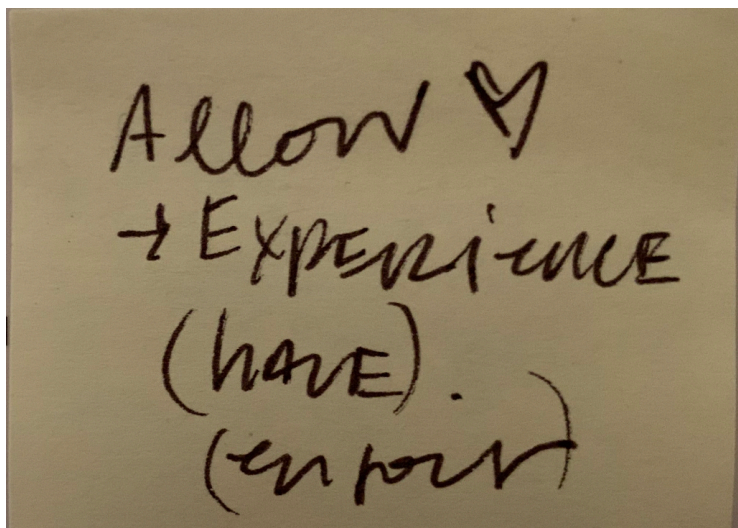
allow.

September 12, 2020

My favorite story of the week is brought to you by an unexpected (?) snowstorm on Tuesday, September 8. The school I work at does not have bus transportation, and the system/app that typically allows the students to stay in the classroom until they are called was 'down' - not working, unavailable. This means that all the children were to be outside, as well as all the teachers and staff in the building - 'all hands on deck'. It was cold. Since it was 90 degrees the day before, and expected to warm up again after the storm passed, the amount of snow gear that made its way out of hibernation may not have been what it will be in another month or so. Let's just say there was a bit of exposed skin on the sidewalk. The sky was fully overcast and misting, but not enough to be inside. School is out at 3:30 and the kids and adults are still waiting for their car at 4pm. During this time, the misting sky turned to snow. When the snow first started, I heard

the typical sound of kids and first snow, a natural response of wonder and awe – a muffled crowd whisper of ‘it’s snowing’. I heard it in a rushed moment, as I was trying to be helpful in an unhelpful way getting kids to their cars and keeping the cars moving (there were a lot of us out there trying to be useful – but the process was just going to be what it was). Fingertips and toes frozen as a crescendo to a day that never warmed up inside only to finish itself outside, I opened a car door for a little girl. The little girl was trying to hurry with a bouncing backpack as big as she was and both hands full of something. She steps up (at least a foot high) into the car, and barely able to get the words out as the weight of her backpack wants to tumble over, she exclaims to her person, ‘it’s snowing!’ – capturing all the essence of a magical little girl with a squeaky voice, of life and nature, of the awe of what is and what can be.

I themed September ‘allow’. It took me a minute to consider the perspective I had at the end of December when I created the monthly themes. My post it note for the month reads: ‘allow’, and then underneath an indented arrow points to ‘experience’, and then in parenthesis under that it says ‘have’, ‘enjoy’. I think the inspiration was to enjoy September. It’s my favorite month. It can go by in a hurry if I am not present to it.



Allow is a great word. The experience of what it means to ‘allow’ when related to the inside world of feelings, impulses, thoughts, and sensations can change one’s experience of day. At least it did for me.

Have you ever heard of the Sedona Method?

Following the Breckenridge summer of 2012, I became fascinated with alternative methods of healing. I wanted to read and experience everything I could. I had a good friend with a collection of resources that contained so much content – content so new to me, new to my thinking and being in the world. I was leaving her house to drive the 90 minutes back to Denver. I wanted to listen to something juicy, something that would change my thinking and create a new and helpful way of managing my emotions. My interest was as personal as it was practical, I was teaching a class to high school students

that allowed me the freedom to share ideas and techniques supporting emotional freedom. The alternative school I taught at allowed for alternative ideas.

I borrowed a set of cd's called The Sedona Method, and was excited to listen.

The content could not have been more dry and boring. I wanted to stop shortly after I began listening. The Sedona Method was just that - a method. No more, no less. A method. It was a practice. A new skill that was not going to 'wow' me in content, nope. It was going to have to be applied and practiced.

Yuck. At that time, I was still moving too fast inside to slow down and practice a slow moving method. The method was to notice the feeling inside and ask yourself questions about that feeling: Can I allow it? If so, am I open to letting it go? If so, when?

Ready for the rest of this exciting method?

You do it over and over again when you feel the feeling. And if you desire, you can intentionally bring up a feeling and allow it by following the method. Each time releasing its power.

I didn't stop the cd when I wanted to. I slowed down enough to stick with it - most likely motivated by the need for a lesson plan. I chose to practice the technique. And I practiced it the whole way down the mountain.

The method became a habit. Over time, the habit lessened the

intensity of feelings that lived inside of me. Feelings that had held massive momentum, growing in intensity throughout the course of my lifetime – most likely my contribution to patterns that had been born into my cellular data, my ‘ancestor code’ – a play on my interpretation of epigenetics. Patterns that had not been examined. Patterns that had not been disrupted.

The precursor to allowing is to notice. To notice is self-awareness. Self-awareness, or just awareness, is cultivated in the practice of mindfulness, or stillness. Not a difficult concept. Perhaps a difficult practice at first as is anything you try for the first time – or try again after a long time.

When we notice our inside world and how it responds to certain stimuli, we can choose to allow the response. When we allow the response we can be curious about it. Why is it so strong? What story am I telling about the response?

Do I have the power to tell a different story? Can I create the meaning I attribute to the feeling? Can I intentionally tell stories that create meaning in a way that supports me and lends itself to my own personal growth?

Can I choose to let go of beliefs that limit me or contribute to patterns that keep me stuck or spinning in the same undesirable outcomes?

Yes.

I can.

cheetah.

September 19, 2020

When I notice myself sleep walking in the dull direction of rote living, I have to shake it out and get a little stern: Sally. Snap out of it. Better. Be better.

Stagnant living. What does it mean? Stagnant. Same.

Jinny Ditzler is considered to be one of the original 'life coaches'. She created a formula for engagement. In the preface to her book *Best Year Yet*, she mentions one of her 'aha' moments happened when a boss called her out on results. Longer story, but basically she 'woke up' from the trance of just showing up, to intention and engagement in the why - what results was she showing up for?

Allow.

Have you ever locked in to a rule so tightly that you held fast to 'no' without considering the why or an alternative viewpoint? Just 'No.' Why? 'Because I said so.'

Can I \_\_\_\_\_? (no)

Is it cool if \_\_\_\_\_? (no)

Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_? (no)

And this unexamined and authoritative 'NO' may be the dynamic

you have with yourself, as well as those you are closest to.

Enter in people you see rarely or may never see again:

Can I \_\_\_\_\_? (sure)

Is it cool if \_\_\_\_\_? (sure)

Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_? (of course not)

W.T.F.

I wish I had the answer to why this happens. Maybe I will by the end of this post.

Let's try this whole thing again but include a pause and then a shift in the response.

Can I \_\_\_\_\_? (nuh...wait...hm...is this really a big deal?...why not? - 'okay, sure.')

Is it cool if \_\_\_\_\_? (not todaaaa.....wait....hold on...I suppose it's not that big of a deal...'yeah, that sounds great.')

Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_? (yeah...I mi....wait...what do you want again? Actually, no I don't care at all - go for it)

What is happening here?

We have rules. Oh do we have rules. Rules for rules. What happens when we start to be curious about the rules?

Do you notice your rules?

Do you question or examine the rules?

Positive change and sustainable growth outcomes have to begin with awareness. In the example of the 'no' above, it may be easy to recognize the unexamined pattern at home, at school, or another familiar setting.

What about the dialogue and rules you set with your own self?

Glennon Doyle is intense and expressive, she displays raw emotion and wicked vulnerability that shakes her audience and wakes them up out of the dull trance of day to day.

I love GD because who doesn't love someone who is unafraid, but I can only do it in small chunks. She's a 15 on a scale to 10 and I think I regulate at about a 7 or 8.

When I go back to my 'why' to shake out the dullness or the roteness of day to day, I think of a few words that are consistent with how I want to show up and express myself, to be in alignment with the results I desire: validate. inspire. uplift. These are the words I put on what happens when I have a great day or a great experience. When I validate myself, I find it natural to validate others. When I take the time to create an inspired state, it radiates and others benefit. When I tell a story on the inside that allows my thoughts and feelings to be that of upliftment, the thoughts and feelings that spill out match an uplifted spirit.



My desire to infuse myself with life juice was because I wanted to help the kids. I wanted the outcomes to change. No suicide. No violence. I wanted the kids to pulse with a knowing of their own value, worth, and potential that was so evident to me when I sat with them. And evident they didn't see it in themselves.

Rules.

Glennon Doyle. Untamed. The Cheetah.

I have only listened to the preface of Glennon's book, *Untamed*. I should rephrase and say Glennon's wildy popular book, *Untamed*. Listening to the preface is apparently a trend of mine - I love context, the backstory. Glennon tells this story of a Cheetah exhibit at a zoo. The 'show' was a live demonstration of how a cheetah can be tamed when raised with a yellow lab.

Glennon did not buy it. She looked into the cheetah's eyes - the cheetah was born to be a cheetah. Of course, Glennon tells the story with so much force that you're bawling from your toes up - a vomit. Whether it is because you match Glennon's intensity (which is why I'm good with about 10 minutes at a time), or because you resonate with the stupidity of taming a cheetah, or maybe it's because the idea of wild and untamed living gets your attention. Passion. Full expression of the talents, skills, and abilities that live inside of you.

We can live the unexamined no. The unexamined no most likely has a large fanbase. A majority, which allows the privilege of 'no' to be socially acceptable. Status quo.

Or you can shake it out and just be curious about the ‘nu...h... wait...why no?’ and see what happens. What happens when you let down the guard and allow a different, or a new, experience.

The energy shifts.

Energy is dynamic. It is not static. We are an evolving species. There is no supreme way, no supreme (elusive) way to be. We are born to move toward daily discomforts and continually grow/evolve from the experience.

We are not a fragile species unequipped to handle change and uncertainty.

Love yourself enough to care about how you feel. Why no? Why the rule? What happens if you let go of the rule? Is there a sense of relief? Can you allow yourself to enjoy a new idea? A new choice? A new experience? What happens if you try?

To resist is the hard no. To allow is the opposite of the hard line, the absolute. What if...?

Ahhhh....possibility. Now THIS feels good.

context.

September 26, 2020

Context.

Meaning.

Connect the dots.

A story.

Archetypes.

Roles.

Rules.

A dog sits in front of a building. The building appears to be a business. The business appears to be selling something from a window. The dog is probably interested in what is coming out of that window. Food is most likely coming out of that window.

Images. Pictures.

A picture tells a thousand words.

Imagine all the 'frames' or images/pictures that one is exposed to, or moves through, in a minute of 'time', much less the hours in a day. Imagine all the different segments that host different settings, different 'times of day' - morning, noon, night, before work/school, after work/school, time spent independent of others, time spent dependent on others: different purposes, different characters, different meaning.

Day.

Segments.

Roles.

Jobs.

Purpose.

Meaning.

As we move through the segments, or the moments, of a day we can do so in a trance. We can assume so much based on meaning we have attributed to a variety of settings, time – time of day, time of year; characters – the roles each plays, archetypes (the fat guy, the skinny kid, the smart one, the dumb one, the funny one – insert age, gender, race, body composition, hair color, etc etc etc.)

So much intelligence we have within living systems. The intelligence of our cells. The intelligence to categorize. The intelligence to mimic. The intelligence to protect and survive. The intelligence to create. The intelligence of curiosity – to ask questions and to wonder. The intelligence of focus. The intelligence of problem solving. The intelligence of solution finding.

So much intelligence.

Back to the image of the dog sitting in front of the business.

I was scrolling through a series of text messages that included

A LOT of visual messages (pictures and short video clips) in a wasted effort to find my neighbor's internet passcode. As I hurriedly sped through the text stream, I couldn't help but smile and laugh to myself as I captured the context of mostly senseless, but somuchfun 'nothingness', of a relationship that has evolved over time and proximity, between myself and my neighbor - and his dog, Smoosh.

The picture of the dog sitting in front of the business is one I came across while scrolling for the passcode. The message that accompanied the picture: Smoosh angling for ANOTHER treat from the coffee shop. The business was a local coffeeshop near the park that both my neighbor and I visit most days - some days together, most days independent of one another. The park is essential in the context of our story. I have to pass his house to walk to the park. If there was no park, I most likely would not have had so many rendezvous with this neighbor - if not for his front porch, if not for his cute dog, etc, etc.

Context.

The context of the picture is wide and deep. I cannot look at the picture without the corners of my mouth growing into a smile - a big smile. The more I consider the picture whether looking at it on my phone or in my mind's eye, I can grow the smile into a broad, wide, tooth-full, gushing grin that resonates only with pure joy of humorous context the picture brings to me.

Context.

Everything has context.

In the preface of Michelle Obama's book *Becoming*, she shares how as a child she was taught to understand that people have context. Specifically, she had an older relative that could be distant and calculating. She learned early to assume context – there was more to the story. Even if she and her brother had no idea what the context was, there was still a bigger story – broader context to give meaning.

Life can portray fiction. Life can emulate a movie, a show. Interpreting circumstances, situations, and events through categorical lenses can help one organize information. Attaching definitions to particular 'roles' and 'rules' supports our subconscious stroll through what is perceived to be 'everyday life'. The roles and rules change as the segments change.

What happens when we stop being aware of the story we tell and the meaning we place on our perception of 'context'? What happens when we assume, and assume, and assume based on unexamined 'rules' placed on perceived images, or nonstop picture frames? Unexamined rules that fuel behavior – what we say, what we do or don't do.

The story we tell.

Do our stories capture a broader knowing grounded in possibility? Do our stories resonate with and contribute to connection and meaning? Do our stories contribute to what Martin Seligman has researched to be the scientific theory of happiness: PERMA.

Positive emotions – do our thoughts and feelings mostly con-

tribute to that which is uplifting, or do our thoughts and feelings contribute to a fear based theme?

**Engagement** – do we spend most of our moments, our time, present with what we are doing, resonating with the moment and having a sensual experience with what is happening? Or are we mostly disengaged, rote, moving through the motions with little engagement to where we are, who we are with – being intentional with how we want to show up and express ourselves?

**Relationships** – context. Do we allow for our own broader story and the broader story in others, or do we mostly react to dynamics that show up based on unexamined scripts that include rules for roles that we and others play?

**Meaning** – are we connecting to our own context and spending time growing that which we value and feel pulled toward, or are we striving or forcing ‘meaning’ and giving the power to others, or outside conditions, to derive or define the meaning in our segments, our day to day experience of living?

**Achievement** – growth. Am I getting better? Do I shift my mindset and attitude to consider context, a bigger picture? Do I allow a broader definition of growth to myself and others? Do I reinforce ‘growth’ as achievement, rather than continue attachment to conditions as a measure of growth (grades in school, a ‘title’ – homeowner/level of education/job status, income, etc).

So much to consider.

SOMETHING MORE.

The story I tell.

To capture a moment.

To resonate with what is.

So much beauty.

So much love.

Love to give.

To receive.

Allow.



ALLOW

Fri, Jun 19, 6:51 PM



smoosh angling for ANOTHER treat from the coffee shop.

10

shift

shift.

October 3, 2020

Shift.

Have you ever felt saturated? Have you felt an all-consuming state of overwhelm? And then just like that it releases, it lets go. The void of despair vanishes. In an instant the fog clears. No action required. Clarity. A clear path, or reasonable next step, presents itself as if it were there the whole time. A logical sequence of events unfolds. A confirmed knowing that things work out. A new perspective painting a much more manageable, reasonable, or even logical, 'picture'.

Shift.

An all-clear. A reset. Open. A feeling of possibility. Positive

expectancy.

I love a good shift.

The more I notice shifts as they happen in the day to day, the more aware I am of the general, natural experience of my thoughts and ideas continually shifting to allow for a more expansive interpretation of whatever the situation, circumstance, or event is that I am letting consume me. I can begin to anticipate the shift, a clearing.

I think what I just described is the opposite of what can be an accepted way of moving through 'day'. Unconsciously maintaining a muddled, unexamined mindset that assumes it is necessary and contingent to one's survival, perhaps even a moral obligation - 'the right thing to do', to anticipate the next worst thing.

If I can become aware of the daily shifts in my mood and attitude (noticing thoughts and feelings and the story they tell - fear or possibility), then I can at least become aware of how internal shifts are similar to external shifts (ie. weather may be a helpful observation of how shifts occur in nature). Once I recognize how much the shift is part of my experience, I can get into a space of choice. If I can assume shifts happen and are available, external dynamics begin to lose their power even if they don't outwardly change. Acknowledging shifts occur that allow for a broader perspective and knowing of what is possible, diffuses the bomb.

Ordinary day, extraordinary way. Anticipate the shift. And then validate the hell out of it when it happens. Guess what happens

now? The pathways shift. Our natural response shifts to one of possibility. We build new maps. New internal roadways, new patterns.

We are so intelligent. So intelligent.

This content share is nothing more than flipping a script. Rather than continuing worn paths of preparing for the next worst thing, we flip to intentionally creating new paths toward the next best thing.

That's all it is.

10.10.20

October 10, 2020

*t's 10-10-20. The most special of special days. In honor of the day, I'd like to reshare a post from 2019.*

Synonym. Two words that mean the same thing.

Smoosh is a metronome.

Smoosh is my neighborhood bestie. My neighbor's dog. Smoosh is my reference point for equilibrium...balance...not too much, not too little...enough.

My tagline for my project is *ordinary day....extraordinary way.*

What this means to me is that our pleasure and satisfaction exists and is available in the ordinary – or what is perceived as ordinary.

Back to Smoosh the metronome.

A yoga instructor recently was sharing his ‘dharma’ throughout the practice and his story was about how his partner left for ten days and that he would be the metronome for their two young girls.

As soon as he said it, I resonated with the word – metronome. What a perfect word for the state of well-being.

When I think of Smoosh or when I am near Smoosh – when I bring my awareness to her Smooshiness. I resonate with a feeling. Smoosh has nothing for me. Smoosh is 100% Smoosh. Smoosh just is. There’s just something about Smoosh that expands everything inside of me – especially my gut (at school with kids I call it the belly space).

This feeling exists. Sans Smoosh. Smoosh just happens to be this dog that allows me to clear my resistance (ie. stress).

Expansion. Clarity. Connection. Openness.

Love.

Love without any sort of condition connected to it...it just is.

This feeling or state is the metronome. This is wellbeing.

Practicing self-awareness helps us recognize this space.

Being open to a state of love – a state that exists without any condition needing to be met (not something to earn or be worthy of). To allow love to exist. To resonate. In day. In moment.

Love exists. The metronome of the universe.

Taking a minute to resonate with it is what makes that which can seem so ordinary...feel so extraordinary.

woke.

October 17, 2020

In my late-early years, teaching Behavioral Health at Hemet high school in Hemet, California, I had a student who left a comment on a semester exam that asked for course feedback. His comment stuck with me. He wrote: *'...most was bullshit and a waste of time, but every now and then you threw out a nugget I could chew on.'*

There is something tender in direct, honest feedback. He nailed it.

The nugget.

The nugget precedes the shift. The nugget is essential.

I write these blogs in a somewhat lucid state of early morning.

This one is a doozy.

Anticipate a nugget. Let the rest go.

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Consciousness is awareness.

‘Woke’ is a word that is trending. The digital age lent itself to disruption. Disruption creates discomfort. Discomfort has a job. Discomfort gets one’s attention. When one attends to discomfort they shift their focus. When you are aware of the shift you are conscious of it. A conscious person is awake. Woke.

Have you ever worn a pair of shoes that gave you blisters...wait for it...more than once? It may have taken three or more ‘reps’ to wake you up to your own power to problem solve for new outcomes.

Have you ever had what feels like an out-of-body experience where you become a witness to your role in a conversation that sounds more like a memorized script stuck on replay? The theme of the script being a version of complaining or blaming – finger pointing.

The out of body experience is awareness. It’s neutral. It’s an observation.

This is consciousness.

When we wake up to recognizing thought patterns that tell the story which fuels our behavior, we shift into what Michael Singer

calls the seat of consciousness.

If consciousness is at the center, when we rest in this space we can observe oppositional forces that maintain a physical world.

Imagine a tennis ball represents consciousness; one's awareness or ability to observe, witness, notice their experience.

The tennis ball is suspended in space with one kid size hula hoop placed horizontally around it, and another kid size hula hoop placed vertically.

This is the structure of a cell. A center (nucleus) within a container. The function of the cell is to maintain integrity, balance, and fluidity. Human beings are made up of trillions of these cells.

When we are conscious we can observe the functions of a physical world. We can observe the oppositional forces that create structure, and we can observe the tangential/ push-pull forces that maintain the space within the structure.

When we are aware of functions we can use them as tools to support our experience. When we lose our connection to consciousness, we can get stuck and/or spin in the functions, falsely assuming there is no other choice.

A relevant application in real time?

The internet is not in charge. You observe and manage your use of it. It's a tool.



Social media is not in charge. You observe and manage your use of it. It's a tool.

When you are tapped in to your consciousness, you are alive. You are breath. You are movement. You are aware of how you interpret energy and information through your physical senses. You are the storyteller. You are intelligence.

You are badass.

101.

October 24, 2020

A shift in the temperature. A shift in a mood. A shift in perspective. A shift into a balanced state. A shift out of a balanced state. Subtle shifts slowly illuminate. Subtle shifts slowly darken. You are the observer. You are the witness. You are the noticer.

When the temperature shifts, we manage it. We may even anticipate the shift and plan accordingly. When one gets out ahead of the anticipated shift it allows one to maintain a sense of comfort and control. There is a sense of comfort in maintaining routines and structures that support one's day to day experience.

Noticing cycles and patterns in nature allow one to plan (somewhat) - but not always. Unexpected shifts in weather patterns can create inconvenience (at best). Inconvenience allows for a sense of discomfort. Discomfort is a form of pain. Our intelligent

system has receptor sites for pain and responds accordingly. When we notice pain and discomfort, we can soothe it. We can slow down and attend to the experience.

Cycles. Patterns. Shifts. Moods. Energy. Dynamic. Movement.

Energy in motion. E-motion.

Noticing the shifts within as a curious observer allows one to identify what is happening. Being a curious witness to the response allows one to wonder about what is happening. Understanding the intelligence of the nervous system can support a perspective that allows for the feeling experience of energy in motion rather than the reactive experience of discomfort. When we are present to the experience we can manage the experience. Managing one's experience is regulating the response. Just like we can regulate our response to the shifts in weather, we can regulate our response to the shifts in our inside world.

I refer to the inside world as: Feelings, Impulses, Thoughts, Sensations. FITS. One can identify, understand, and manage one's FITS.

Daniel Goleman may define emotional intelligence as such: to identify, understand, and manage one's emotions. Energy in motion. Emotional regulation.

Who are you? You are the Observer. You are the Witness. You are the Noticer.

When I OWN my experience in the NOW, I have WON the

opportunity to choose. Choice lives in the space between cause and effect. The more I practice slowing down enough to be the noticer, the more this space grows. The more one can anticipate the pattern of cause and effect, the more one can plan accordingly (somewhat). Problem-solving lives in this space. As do all things that contribute to growth: imagine-ation, creativity, broad view, logical next steps, etc.

The space between cause and effect is where we can execute reasonable next steps that contribute to sustainable growth outcomes.

Execute. Executive. Leader. Lead. Control.

Executive Functions. I am in charge of me when I observe my inside world and witness my response. I notice the opportunity to move toward discomfort. All I ever have to do is the next thing.

The sweet spot. The somewhat. It is in this space between where I am okay with with the unknowing. The uncertainty. In this space is balance. Equilibrium. In this space is the essence of context - more. The something more. In this space is enough.

It's enough to notice the anticipation of possibility. It's enough to allow for a sense of wonder.

Emotional Intelligence 101.

spooky.

October 31, 2020

Spooky.

I just wanted to type Spooky because it is Halloween.

Many bloggers and content creators use a successful technique of sharing 'tips' that allow the reader to move toward a problem within a mutual area of interest.

In case you missed it, my area of interest is personal wellbeing.

In Denver, it may feel as if the 2020 delight is amping up again. In this blog post, I'd like to share three wellbeing 'tips' to position yourself ahead of it. Insert Samantha Jones spin on the popular saying: '\_\_\_\_\_ me badly once, shame on you... .twice? shame on me!' And for the record...I would vote YES on eradicating the phrase 'shame on \_\_\_\_\_' from language use... but it's a funny quote.

TIP #1: Create.

Often it is easier to notice the problem than the solution. And this may be one of the 'not smartest' sentences I have written because 'duh' if there was no problem there would not be a solution. Focus is the word we are looking for: it is easier to focus on the problem than to shift one's focus to a solution. In the world of oppositional forces, if we can become aware of the problem, we can flip it to discover a possible solution.

Abraham-Hicks teaches me over and over again that when we know what we don't want, it gives us valuable information for what we do want. When we notice discomfort in the form of 'too much', especially when it comes to consuming: too much food, too much media, too much INPUT. Rather than focusing on the perceived enemy of the 'binge', we can be curious about the balance. If I notice too much consumption, the valuable data it gives me is that I am out of balance with its opposing force of creativity. To balance out the consumption, I can choose to create. Create is a word. To create is to develop an idea. A design. To design new ideas. To create an opinion. To bring it to 'life'. To create is to contribute. To be 'part of'. If Covid pt 1 knocked you breathless, can you get ahead of another round? If we broke down Covid to its least common denominator, would it resonate with uncertainty? unexpected? Will uncertainty and unexpected happen again in your lifetime? Yes. Yes it will. By being curious about how to get ahead of another shut down, we can practice the skills, tools, and strategies that allow us to get ahead of the unexpected in day to day. To expect the unexpected is to get ahead of the 'spook'. (I worked in Spook - unexpectedly)

TIP #2: Control.

Can I control my attitude? Yes. Yes I can. And if you happen to be reading this and it makes you feel more OUT of control by the suggestion that you SHOULD be able to be in control: No. Maybe not now. Big Feelings want to be in control and it feels impossible when they show up. Big Feelings carry crazy momentum. For the majority of us that can recognize a choice in attitude - if we can practice choosing a balanced perspective, we can support those who have more difficulty

managing Big Feelings. We can contribute to a more balanced social environment that allows those who experience difficulty in finding balance a soothing setpoint to potentially resonate with, or at least not react to. I can control my attitude by getting out ahead of it and intentionally taking time to remind myself that I have focus. I can choose what I focus on. A few weeks ago I published some content that referenced a fun podcast that my neighbor and I are developing. The essence of the podcast is basically two questions: what do you consider your biggest accomplishment in the last week? what are you looking forward to accomplishing in the next week? If you allowed time to yourself one day a week to be curious about your answer to those two questions, that alone can train your focus toward growth. By naming an accomplishment, you validate yourself as a contributing human. By looking forward to what you desire, you are CREATING your own desired outcomes. How is that for balance?

Here is one of my favorite quotes about attitude:



"In space flight, "attitude" refers to orientation: which direction your vehicle is pointing relative to the Sun, Earth and other spacecraft. If you lose control of your attitude, two things happen: the vehicle starts to tumble and spin, disorienting everyone on board, and it also strays from its course, which, if you're short on time or fuel, could mean the difference between life and death. In the Soyuz, for example, we use every cue from every available source—periscope, multiple sensors, the horizon—to monitor our attitude constantly and adjust if necessary. We never want to lose attitude, since maintaining attitude is fundamental to success.

In my experience, something similar is true on Earth. Ultimately, I don't determine whether I arrive at the desired professional destination. Too many variables are out of my control. There's really just one thing I can control: my attitude during the journey, which is what keeps me feeling steady and stable, and what keeps me headed in the right direction. So I consciously monitor and correct, if necessary, because losing attitude would be far worse than not achieving my goal."

— Chris Hadfield, *An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth*


### TIP #3 Curious.

Can you be curious about your own data?

Here is a 'report card' I referenced in a recent Sunday Story @sallysifer about using Martin Seligman's happiness acronym PERMA as a report card for reflection. Can you reflect on the results that are showing up in your life? Data is a constant. Feedback is consistent. Practicing self-awareness allows one to notice what is showing up in the day to day and reflecting on the data. Here is a little report card for curiosity. I added an additional 'report card' based on essential learning outcomes developed by Dr William Spady (and shared on Amy Breeze Cooper's *Soul Path Parenting* podcast).

# SOMETHING MORE.

areas for reflection      grade      comments: what did I do well, what do I want to improve

Positive Emotions		
Engagement		
Relationships		
Meaning		
Achievement 		

skills to grow      Y/N      what can this look like, feel like, sound like

Self-Directed Learner		
Collaborative Worker		
Community Contributor		
Complex Thinker		

PS. I am on board with these tips. I am an active participant.



# 11

## appreciation

authentic.

November 7, 2020

What often is so easy to recognize in another MAY BE what one fails to recognize in oneself.

Have you ever been curious about your own values? You may assume that you know what you value.

What one values may become more clear (the *20-20 vision* kind of clear) when one is aware of what they disdain. And by the word disdain, I mean disgusted by - having a viscerally repulsive reaction to.

Viscerally repulsive reactions can easily be attributed to conditions. For this blog post, let's consider external conditions as that which can be observed and measured. I often refer to

‘conditions’ as circumstances, situations, or events.

When we have such a strong reaction to something that is external, we ‘feel’ it internally. What we ‘feel’ (literally feel – fast, hot, heavy, tight) is most likely the stress response intelligently responding to what we have interpreted as a danger and/or threat. Depending on our preferences and particular tendencies, we may respond with our own version of fight, flight, freeze, or faint.

Living in conditions interpreted as dangerous or threatening keeps the intelligent stress response activated. The stress response is internal. The conditioned response to internal sensations is individualized. Maybe one talks about the sensation as the result of a problem. Maybe one talks about the problem. Maybe one talks to other people with the same problem. Maybe one denies. Maybe one exploits. Maybe one exerts a lot of effort and energy to manage the sensation from an external vantage point.

What if it’s the interpretation of the problem that keeps the problem alive and by default keeps the stress response activated. What if we change our interpretation of the problem. What if we disrupt the story we tell that keeps the problem activated and in charge.

If one can recognize that which they have such a strong response to, one can be curious about what they value by looking at what lies in opposition to the activating condition.

If you have a visceral reaction to being lied to you must hold a

value of truth.

If you have a visceral reaction to feeling manipulated or played, you must hold a value of authentic communication (or honest communication).

If you have a visceral reaction to feeling held captive by rules and laws, you must hold a value of freedom.

Values.

In the coaching program, Best Year Yet, there is a question about values: What are your top five values. The point of this in BYY is to align your desires, or goals, to be aligned with what you value.

To live from a space of authenticity is to live from your (not the other) values. That which you hold to be valuable is what resonates with you. What resonates is what's true. When something resonates it feels good, it feels right - balanced. Whole.

Getting stuck in the problem doesn't feel good. Disrupt the 'stuck' by shifting the focus to a solution. Stop the crazy by stepping away from what you are pushing against. Ask yourself why such a strong reaction. If I am having such a strong reaction to \_\_\_\_\_ it must mean that I value \_\_\_\_\_.

We are pulled toward that which is valuable. Flow with the current of wellbeing in your life. Fighting against the current is living on a treadmill. You don't get anywhere.

The space where value resides is without conditions.

When I can love me for free, it's easy to love you for free.

appreciate.

November 14, 2020

When something appreciates it grows.

Appreciate is just a word. To appreciate is an action I suppose. I can state that which I appreciate. The feeling state of appreciation is a gush. It grows.

I have ~~some~~ somewhat of a morning routine. During a work week I get up extra early. This early morning routine of mine has been cultivated over time.

I create a lot of content. The content has been cultivated over time.

The early morning time grew because it was a time that I could most easily quiet my inside world to create content.

When I forced creation it didn't go so well. I would end up with a result, but the process was painful. It would include tears and mean self talk. When things didn't go the way I wanted them to, I blamed me. When things did go the way I wanted them to, I didn't give myself credit.

Over time I flipped the pattern.

My early morning time begins with a knowing that the gush is not only available, it's evident.

It's done.

The gush cannot not be. Whatever thoughts show up when I wake up I can wonder about, I can laugh at them, I can be curious about them, I can be fascinated about the connection of what I was paying attention to the prior day and how it was active when I woke up. It's data. My data.

I smile in anticipation of the gush. I do a variety of weird things that I don't mind confessing to - but I don't want to embarrass you as you read them.

As I get out of bed, I may stumble my way through a disastrous bedroom and perhaps hallway. I don't react to it, it just is. I'll put things away eventually. I make coffee, drink water. Whatever might show up in my inside world I know is moments away from being cleared. Cleared to a space where it may never show up again.

I know there will be a time when I wake up clear. It happens now and then. It doesn't matter so much to me because I know whatever does show up is mostly just interesting. I don't have to react to it. I didn't do anything 'wrong', there is nothing 'wrong' with me. It just is.

I have a corner of my couch where I created a lounge. My legs

are propped up on a makeshift ottoman. I have a tall window that doesn't mean so much in the early morning I suppose. A lit candle sits on the corner of the piece of furniture in front of the window. I can't think what the furniture is called. It doesn't matter.

I have soothing music that I put on as soon as I wake up. I light the candle. As I begin to write I use the flashlight on my phone and line it up behind pillows to find just the right amount of light to add to the space so I can see the lines on the notebook.

I don't write right away. I may not write at all. I do nothing but sit in the space. I can do this for hours.

Candle. Coffee. Comfort.

I sit. I notice the simplicity. I love the simplicity.

It just is.

And here it comes.

Open. Free. Alive. Steady. Clear. Expansive. Love. Wellbeing. Enough. Balance.

I allow it. I have the experience. It always shows up. Sometimes the signal is further away and it doesn't line up as clear as I know it can. I notice it. I know that those days will be what they will be. I have come to anticipate the next day. More clear. More open.

When we allow a bit of hunger, the food tastes so good. When we

notice what is missing, we recognize its value when it shows up again. Life has a way of creating meaning. Meaning appreciates. It grows.

What we value appreciates. We give it worth. We notice the absence of that which we value. We notice the absence of clarity, of comfort. The absence is essential to the noticing. The noticing of the absence is awareness. Awareness is aliveness. To live is to be curious about what matters, what is valuable. What holds meaning. What is real.

Self-Care. Caring about yourself enough to notice what matters. No one needs to know. Cultivate a curiosity about your own self. What is true to you. You have so much worth. It's all that you are. Worthy. You tell the story. You create meaning by what what you focus on. You are the noticer. Notice what feels good. Really good. Intrinsically good. Unconditionally good. Be curious about it. Notice it. Allow it. Appreciate it because it is good. Notice it grow.

Gush.

bliss.

November 21, 2020

***People wake up to being the hero of their own life when they're tired of being the victim of their own life. – Joseph Campbell, Finding Joe.***

*follow your bliss...*

Have you ever had a profound influence on your life and totally forgotten about it?

I literally just had that experience. As in – just now.

Last month, Forrest and I were taping our wildly popular and mostly famous podcast that you haven't heard of...yet: *it's done*.

Our equally popular and mostly famous guest who goes by a singular name, Johnny, was espousing one wisdomatic insight after another. The 55-minute conversation spans from the engineering process of design, to chocolate milk, to global problem solving, to....Joseph Campbell.

That's right. The Hero's Journey. Follow your bliss.

The Hero's Journey was fundamental to my personal shift. Except that I forgot. Until Johnny brought up Joseph Campbell as his 'person', living or dead, who has been most influential to his thinking.

I knew I had used Joseph Campbell in my lessons to high school students. I found notes I had taken from a documentary, *Finding Joe*. I forgot the documentary existed. I notice it is available on Amazon Prime.

In my experience, Joseph Campbell and his teachings, like everything, are left to one's interpretation. Public school teachers use the Hero's Journey in various projects (okay, two



elementary school teachers I can honestly cite). And in the conversation with Johnny, he mentioned his influence stemmed from an interview between an archbishop and Joseph Campbell. Campbell claimed that faith is the cornerstone, not proof. As with religion, faith negates the need to prove.

Reflecting on the influence of Joseph Campbell through my own interpretation (of other's interpretation - *Finding Joe*), it was the Hero's Journey that captivated me. That throughout history, throughout various civilizations - there is a common storyline, a thread: separation, initiation, return.

The documentary referenced popular literature and film, mythology and fables. Same pattern. An event, circumstance, or situation occurs that gets your attention. It changes your experience of what is real and expected. You choose, or are forced, to move toward it and in so doing, you enter the initiation phase. The fire. The lessons you learn during the initiation you are compelled to teach to others. Return.

The 'Journey', or pattern, may be a lifetime. It may be one life event, it may be multiple life events, it may be daily circumstances.

Discomfort. Separated from what is familiar or expected.

Do I move toward the discomfort and see what it has for me, or do I stay stagnant. Do I stay in the suffering that comes when I deprive myself of new growth and possibility. Do I allow for the evolution of my story, or do I resist it.

*“I don’t believe people are looking for the meaning of life as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive.” – Joseph Campbell*

humanize.

November 28, 2020

Humanize. To humanize something. Anything. What does it mean?

If your answer is ‘to humanize something is to make it human’, then there is another question: what does it mean to be human?

To understand what something IS NOT can add clarity to what something is, its value or deeper meaning.

Is a human a machine?

Is a human an animal?

Is a human a condition?

Curious people ask questions. A question is different from a statement. A question is different from an accusation. A question is different from a complaint. A question is not ammunition used in social play to dominate someone by shutting them up. A true question is asked in a curious way, curious about an answer.

Are you a machine? Are you an animal? Are you a condition?

You are something more.

My easy answer in a school setting relates to the nervous system. We share a survival intelligence with animals. Animalistic tendencies to protect and survive. Instincts to fight, flight, freeze, faint. Animals have thick fur, sharp fangs, claws, strength, speed, etc. Humans have a frontal lobe. Humans problem solve. Humans create solutions.

Humans are storytellers. Humans retain information. Information is useful for progress. Humans progress. Humans evolve. Memory and emotions support survival and progress. Humans focus.

Focusing on survival can feel limiting in an advanced setting such as 2020. Focusing on progress can feel life giving and purposeful.

You get to choose. Self-care is caring about yourself enough to notice the story you tell. You may be able to substantiate the story you tell and understand the 'why'. But then what? Does the story you tell about 'why' lead to something more? Does the story you tell lead to stagnation, or does the story you tell allow for growth and possibility?

When you can be curious and ask genuine questions it feels human. Feeling connected to a sense of possibility may humanize you. It may connect you to your own sense of a greater play in humanity. To humanize yourself is to humanize others. Others may no longer seem abstract and inhumane - puppets, numbers. Hearts beat, eyes shine, dreams align. As we humanize our own

SOMETHING MORE.

self, we may feel more connected to a collective aliveness. More than pawns in a game to be manipulated to win. What is it you want to win? Is there only so much? So much of what?

Almost December.

## 12

### more

more.

December 5, 2020

By the end of the school year following the Breckenridge summer, I declared my own devotion to learning and teaching all things mindfulness.

Looking back at the last (almost) decade, it wasn't the consumption of new knowledge and information ABOUT mindfulness. It was the practice. The practice of slowing down and noticing what it was like to be exactly who I was.

The practice of mindfulness unfolded the answer to my internal question. Growing up, my mom's constant feedback was: 'Sally. Just be yourself.' My familiar split response: 1. relief - is that it? easy. I can do that... and then 2. how the hell do I do that?

When it comes to a return to one's authentic state of wellbeing, no amount of new knowledge and information can substitute the transformative experience of being present in mind and body.

Being the noticer. The noticer of thoughts and feelings and the story I tell.

Is the story one of fear and lack, or is the story one of possibility and plenty.

Here we are in December. So many words used to describe this year. Unprecedented comes to mind.

What's next?

What will be so different January 1, 2021? If #2020 became the answer to the problem - what does it solve?

Taking some time to reflect on the year can set you up for what's next - what's next for you. What do you want next? If #2020 made what's wrong so clear, what is it that is so right?

Tell your own story about what's next. What is it that you have been pushing against? Flip it. This little thought habit can show you what it is you are pulled toward. Live in the space of possibility by constantly getting clear on what it is you are pulled toward. Tell this story.

If I may guess, what most of us are pulled toward widdles down to a version of freedom. Freedom to choose. Freedom to feel. Freedom to wonder. Freedom to be.

Are conditions the requirement for your freedom, or is it the story you tell about the conditions that sets you free?

inspired.

December 12, 2020

The inspired state.

Take me to the inspired state of wellbeing.

Not motivated. Motivated is focused on external outcomes.

Inspired lives inside. It's personal. It feels expansive. A state of possibility. It exists. We tap in.

A fifth grade student made a comment a few weeks back. We were in a comfortable setting with three other fifth grade students. To my knowledge, the group is friendly with one another as they can get 'off task' together.

The environment was comfortable and safe. No triggers.

The student said rather thoughtfully, 'If you think about it, life is really scary. You could do suicide. You could do drugs. A car could run you over.' The other students began to add to that 'matter-of-fact' comment, and the word *depression* surfaced.

All kids have layers. All kids have stories. On the surface, this group is an *All American* cover shoot.

The entry point of myself with this group was related to academic engagement (ie. interest).

I would say there is nothing unusual about the comment. It may even be considered an expected comment.

When bumped, thoughts and feelings spill out.

There wasn't even a bump. Just an opportunity to make a comment.

This was our third meeting together. I can't remember my exact response. I know I had my phone, and I know I was now done with any sort of formality and 'curriculum'. I legitimized myself in less than a minute by saying that I had had depression for over a decade. I showed them a quick scroll of my social media to add evidence of my genuine interest in sharing skills, tools, and strategies to grow goodness - the state of wellbeing.

Within three minutes that conversation spun to what it means to be inspired. And then to a connection of what it *feels* like to be inspired. And then to a curiosity of how that feeling of inspiration can make even the most tedious 'have to' not even a deal.

In another conversation with a parent of a middle schooler, a similar topic came up. A twist to the familiar '*mean kids with power*'. The wondering was: if the kids are engaged (ie. interested...inspired?) does the mean behavior continue to be the issue.



Flip that concept to day-to-day life.

Is mean behavior toward self or other a result of a truly inspired state. An energetic state radiating from the flow of wellbeing.

(mean thoughts and mean feelings trigger mean behavior..results of mean behavior reflect a cruel world)

When you are tapped in to your own state of inspiration, are you mean? Mean to self? Mean to others?

This is a self-care blog. It only has to do with you.

Tapping into an inspired state feels good. Being inspired feels SO GOOD. Inspired people inspire others. It's often not a particular topic of interest that is inspiring, it's the energy. The energetic vibration of living from an inspired state.

Authentic engagement. Authentic possibility. Authentic.

Real.Deal.

I am mostly new to Instagram. I follow and unfollow to stick with what I find to be informative, uplifting, and inspirational. What I find to be interesting. What is cool (to me). What engages me.

My Insta is full of inspiring stories. I choose. I create the algorithm

One inspired story attracts the next inspired story.

Just as one thought attracts the next thought.

Inspired people inspire. An inspired state is tapped into well-being. Wellbeing resonates with equilibrium and balance. And then it grows from there...wherever it is focused.

santa.

December 19, 2020

Something More.

A mist. An essence.

It exists.

The culmination of a calendar year. Remembering.

Are you joyful?

Do you want to be joyful?

Enjoyment exists. It has to. If it didn't exist you wouldn't know what it felt like to be lacking it.

What if joy was baseline. What if to enjoy oneself was the setpoint. Enjoy. What do you enjoy?

When I get bummed out and feel like something is missing, I have learned to notice it. When I notice it, I can be curious about

it. Curious people ask thoughtful questions. What is missing?  
What would be better? Why?

Whatever answers show up, strip them to their essence.

The essence of anything desired is some form of the feeling of  
possibility.

And just who is this Santa and what does this Santa represent?

Magic. Belief. Possibility.

A mist. An essence.

Something More.

It exists. If it didn't, you would never feel less.

gift.

December 26, 2020

It's time to 'wrap this up' with a final 2020 blog: gift.

Originally, I anticipated this final blog to be named: wish. The meaning behind **wish**. had to do with a wish I hold in my heart. Wishes are interesting. A true wish, an authentic wish, has to come from a place centered in wholeness. This means the wish does not come from a space of lack. The wish is not to fill something that is missing.

Nothing is missing.

And yet...

there is something more.

The something more is the source of wellbeing AND the inspired state of possibility that roots itself in desire for more. We are coded to desire - the path to our truest desires are what mold and shape us...we evolve, we grow.

The wish:

*As we begin this final week of a globally inclusive experience, we catch ourselves. We pause our show. The show we star in. We hit the pause and notice the habit. The habit to assume someone or something else is responsible for the imperfection.*

2020 did not do anything to anyone. 2020 is not a global scapegoat. 2020 happened. Circumstances. Situations. Events. They happen. Life unfolds.

When the narrative depends on an enemy, there will always be a 'bad guy'. To push against the enemy keeps us moving upstream. When we let go of the enemy, we shift. We stop pushing against the current, and instead we align with the current. We settle into the flow of what we are pulled toward. The something more.

Here is the gift.

Best I could deconstruct 'gift', was that the best gifts are

unexpected. The best gifts get your attention. True attention is presence. When we are focused, we are in an integrated state of mind, body, and heart. We are present. The best gifts attract the whole of who we are. The best gifts validate. The best gifts are those that allow us to feel seen, heard, valued, and understood.

Wanting for another what we want for ourselves. An aspect of a shared humanity. When we give our own self the gift of validation. When we see ourselves for who we are. When we listen to our truth. When we value ourselves and allow space to understand. This gift is one we can continue to give. When we do this, it becomes a habit. Like anything we practice, we get better at it. Skills, tools, and strategies that at first seem awkward, uncomfortable, and unwanted, become simple. We create a new baseline. A new set point. A space to orient to. A space to live from.

A gift has to be received. To receive, one must be open. Open to the possibility of what the gift holds. The best gifts come unexpected. The best gifts surprise us. The best gifts resonate with a spirit of validation: feeling seen, heard, valued, and understood.

Life is a story that unfolds.

The essence of a gift. When you care about yourself, you open yourself up to this gift of love for your own self first. Orienting to this gift, receiving what is available, makes it easy to radiate this gift toward others. The wish is that of what is possible. The gift may be what is already. The constant return to what is available to receive.

SOMETHING MORE.

The best gifts continue to give.



## About the Author

I originally introduced myself as a ‘lifetime educator’ working in schools since 1995. This past summer I learned the term ‘public academic’, and I think it fits me best. In 2007, I received my MSW from the University of Denver and began working as a school social worker in the greater Denver area. I became passionate about mindfulness and teacher self-care as essential interventions in response to school violence and student death by suicide. I define self-care as caring about yourself enough to notice your thoughts and the story you tell; and choosing skills, tools, and strategies to shift limiting scripts. I have 25 years of experience with all grade levels across three states: Illinois, California, and Colorado. Over the last eight years, I have created several curriculum concepts that include the checkIN and Movement.Breath.Kindness. In June 2020, I published an ebook titled: The Story I Tell. How to make the Age of Disruption work for you. In addition to the ebook, there is a companion eWorkbook that makes it simple to transfer the skills, tools,

and strategies to a classroom or coaching session. This is my second ebook. I publish a weekly blog at [sallyseifferco.blog](https://sallyseifferco.blog). You can follow weekly content on Instagram @sallysifer, as well as visual content that complements blog posts on the Sally & Sifer YouTube channel.

**You can connect with me on:**

 <https://sallyseifferco.blog>

 <https://www.facebook.com/sallysifer>

 <https://www.instagram.com/sallysifer>



## Also by Sally Seiffer

The following is the preface to The Story I Tell: How to make the Age of Disruption work for you.

*No prologue goes unread by me. I love a good backstory. I love broad context to give meaning. Every 'situation' has a backstory. Every human, every living thing, every 'thing' has a story.*

*Context.*

*When we are consumed, stuck or spinning, and reacting to life we miss the context – we miss the bigger picture, the broad view. Situations become isolated events that we respond to in often very scripted or routine ways. People become the role they are assigned by the perceiver, or perceivers. People become the role they assign themselves, consciously or unconsciously, as the receiver. The roles have rules as to how we act and respond. We become these robots, these vessels of predictable routine and behavior.*

*This is not living. This is not alive.*

*In Part one, I share my early experience working as a school mental health provider. I felt powerless in response to student death by suicide and school violence. I share my aha moment that came at the end of a school year which included two suicide deaths. After receiving the news the second time, I paced my kitchen floor and questioned the silence, 'what do we do?' The answer I received was, 'Life. Sell life.'*

*The story goes on to tell that I realized I was not alive. I was not living. I had been experiencing a cycle of depression that would come and go every two weeks, and it had gone on for over a decade. I realized that if I could figure out the skills to get my own life back, then I would know the skills to teach others. The skills that worked. The skills that contributed toward life and sustainable growth. Lasting.*

*In Part two, Keeley tells a story of love, without conditions attached to the love. Great love. Keeley is a dog. My dog. The dog I received. The lessons she taught me are easy to see now that she has been dead for almost seven years. The story of Keeley represents something more. Something bigger. We all certainly must have Keeleys around us all the time, everywhere. ‘Keeley’ exists. Love exists. We just choose to open up to it.*

*Love transmits. It has to be received. To turn away from love and possibility is suffering.*

*In Part three, I share some fundamental skills, tools, and strategies that created shifts in my thinking, and transformed my experience of ordinary life. Self-awareness helped me recognize my limiting thoughts. When I changed my thinking, I changed the story. I created my own script. I chose the filter. The new story created new feelings. I felt good. And I knew why. I knew how to create it and sustain it. It felt extraordinary to be so empowered.*

*I have been out of the depression cycle for over three years. I publish a weekly blog, STuFfeD: self-care 101. The tagline is ‘ordinary day...extraordinary way’. My definition of self-care is to care about yourself enough to notice your thoughts. What story do they tell? Limiting stories lead to limiting outcomes. Expansive thoughts,*

*rooted in possibility, lead to expansive feelings and results. Results that are able to sustain themselves. Results that continue to grow, to expand. Evolve.*

*The practice of self-awareness, or mindfulness, allows one to disrupt stories that don't edify and contribute toward life-giving outcomes. Personal Growth content can be reduced to one primary stance: tell your own story.*



### **The Story I Tell: How to make the Age of Disruption work for you.**

My mission in all my work is to share content that allows adults and children to feel seen, heard, valued, and understood. This first ebook includes the context of my 'why', and goes on to share 'how'. I integrated the work of so many others whom contributed to sustainable growth outcomes in my life. Please use and share generously. Available on Teachers Pay Teachers.

