Finding Your Full “Yes” Opens Up the Gateway to Passion and Purpose



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Ever felt a sense of unrest? A tinge of anxiety? Or what about some fear of the known or the unknown? High performers know exactly what this feeling is … it’s the anticipation of something great that is about to happen. But it can also be our Achilles heel, the hole we fall into when we are in a moment of weakness. I’ve been on this quest for fulfillment for most of my life. And at times, I have obtained it, only for it to slip away as what once was magical fades into the light of the mundane once again. The quest for greatness is a slippery slope. It’s one that requires an ability to push oneself into the territory of the uncomfortable time and time again. This is often interpreted as hustle. But I argue that

there is a different way forward – one that doesn't look like burnout and instead looks like freedom. The freedom to choose our FULL "yes."

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How are you showing up?

In my recent self-exploration, I realized that I've been trying to *be* someone. I've been trying to *be* a great mother. I've been trying to *be* a great friend. I've been trying to *be* a great executive. The list goes on, and like most top performers, I play a lot of roles to different people in my life. And instead of showing up as my whole self, I found that I was modulating to the room. I would be one person with my kids. I have a different demeanor, tone of voice and energy when my kids are around than when I'm in a team meeting. These unique situations require different sides of myself, that's for sure. But what I found is that instead of being all of these versions of myself I wanted to show up as, I was trying. Trying is the death of being. It takes you out of your natural flow state and exerts effort where there can be none. To *be* is effortless. However, most of us have built a life of effort that starts with the character we put on every morning.

Instead of focusing on *who* we show up in the room as, we can focus on *how* we show up into the room. Are you showing up as your whole, centered self? Are you hungry? Are you happy? Are you bringing your full energy and attention forward? Once your needs are met, you can ask how to be best in service to those around you. We can ask, "What gifts do I have to offer this person?" "What do they need from me?" "What are my boundaries for offering those gifts?" By getting in touch with how we are showing up and how we can be in service to the room, it takes our egocentric focus off of the role we are *supposed* to play and what we are *supposed* to do and lets us drop into the moment of connection that life has presented us.

This simple shift in how you approach the room gives you the gift of freedom from a sense of obligation and eliminates imposter syndrome. As a result, I've started putting more focus and intention into how I'm showing up in the many rooms in my life. For example, after work and before heading home to the kids, I can take 10 minutes to do a mindfulness exercise or a meditation designed to relax my nervous system. Before jumping into my team call, I imagine our last big win and show up energetically ready to celebrate again. When I'm noodling a strategy, I can put on my running shoes and run out for an hour or focus on problem-solving on the trail. Ask yourself how you're showing up in the room and what shifts you can make to show up more intentionally.

After focusing on how I was showing up in the room, I shifted my focus to why I was showing up in the room in the first place. This can be a rabbit hole of epic proportions. First, look at all the rooms you're showing up to out of a sense of obligation. In my experience, this was my relationship in my marriage, with my kids and with my family. I felt a responsibility to show up and provide for my family, to be a good example for my kids and to be a caring daughter to my mother. While they all sound noble, the truth is that responsibility sometimes felt like a weight. When I lost my business and wasn't able to show up and provide for my family in the way I imagined. I crashed and burned. I felt like I had failed as a mother, a wife and a daughter. It was a triple whammy that hit hard.

Obligation sets us up for failure and is also a natural byproduct of the way our society is structured. You will find that you have a sense of obligation to something and the weight of that obligation. Especially watch out for things and people where the obligation is too high and costly to your own sense of being and health. This is an unhealthy relationship and will need to come into line and even sometimes be ended in order to find your balance. But also notice where you have a

healthy relationship and instead of obligation, feel a sense of pride and healthy responsibility. These are both areas worth exploring and expanding into as they feel like a great sense of relief when resolved.

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Making decisions with a full “yes”

After you’ve tackled the rooms you feel you *have* to be in, it’s time to look at the rooms you *want* to be in. This is when I found the concept of the full “yes” in a book called *Becoming* by Ben and Azra Bequer, although they admittedly use more flowery language. I believe we all have innate intuition that can guide us on our journey to our best selves. There’s this piece inside of us that just knows when we’re on a mission and on a purpose. And it triggers a slew of neurochemicals that reward us over and over again. However, I’ve also found it equally hard to pinpoint when I’m in that flow and how to stay there. In fact, I had surmised that it wasn’t actually possible to stay there. Until I really tuned into the concept of full “yes.”

Here’s how it works: Every day, we make thousands of micro-decisions that determine how our day will go. For example, in the morning we make a decision between coffee and water. One will hydrate us. One will dehydrate us. So, in essence, we are choosing how we start our hydration for the day. Equally important, we each choose the activities we will take on for the day. We fill our to-do lists and work to accomplish it, whether or not we like what’s on that list. We decide what music we listen to in our car and set the tone for the day. As your experience of the day goes on, you make choices, and those choices impact how you will experience your day.

When I discovered the full “yes,” I started focusing on every micro-decision I was making, no matter how small or inconsequential. And I would ask myself, am I a FULL “yes” to

this? To me, a FULL “yes” meant that I was a “yes” without a moment of hesitation. That my whole body said “yes.” And it often came with a wave of excitement and anticipation. These “yeses” made me feel more alive, whereas, sometimes I was just a “meh … yes … okay.” These “yeses” felt like they added a drag on my day. I noticed I could feel the energy deflate in the room. Then there were times when I wasn’t a “yes at all” on a scale of “absolutely no” to “not really.” The absolute “nos” were a visceral reaction, and the “not reallys” were more a shrug of the shoulders.

Understanding I had this range of “yeses” and range of “nos” was helpful. I had a scale and with that scale in hand I could measure it. But it really clicked in when I started following only my FULL “yeses” and saying “no” to everything else. My theory was that if it wasn’t a FULL “yes,” it was a “no” veiled in some story of obligation, fear or responsibility. And something interesting happened, every day was filled with a lot more FULL “yeses,” and the list of “nos” started dwindling away. I was having to make some tough choices, don’t get me wrong. But with each tough choice came a sense of relief that made the payoff worth the fear that accompanied it. I refocused my energies off of the pursuit of a romantic relationship and on the fulfillment I find in friendship, career and family.

I evaluated my relationship with discipline and noted times when I was disciplined and how much more alive I felt in those moments. And then I started choosing them. In every area of life, I have started to align with my FULL “yes,” and I am noticing that things are flowing effortlessly. And interestingly enough, more opportunities for even more of my FULL “yes” started showing up and knocking at my door. It was as if, by simply opening the door and choosing my FULL “yes,” I was getting even more of my FULL “yes.” And it all starts and ends with a series of micro-decisions that seemed inconsequential but compounded upon each other to turn a

practice into a lifestyle of “yes.”

Finding your FULL “yes” is the key to finding your passion and purpose. It’s hiding in plain sight right underneath that last micro-decision you made. Did you choose your FULL “yes?” Or some other version of “yes?” Or did you say yes to one of your “nos?” This is when we feel most out of alignment and can find ourselves in a place of resentment, so watch for it. If you’re looking to come more into your passion and purpose, start paying attention to your decisions, big and small.

Figure out what your FULL “yes” is, and start following it one decision at a time. It doesn’t mean the journey will be easy. Sometimes your FULL “yes” will come into conflict with your sense of obligation, responsibility and your vision of what it means to continue showing up as who you’ve always been. If there’s one thing you take away from this article, recognize the freedom of taking off the mask, showing up fully into every room and following your FULL “yes.” It leads you on a path of deep intrinsic fulfillment that can’t be matched by any accomplishment we achieve according to the world on the outside.

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