



LET GO OF THE SHOULDAS, OUGHTAS, COULDAS, AND THE DEADLY... IF, ONLYS.

REPLACE THESE WITH WHAT YOU REALLY WANT, SIMPLE AND EASY, THE THINGS THAT BRING YOU FULFILLMENT NOW. STOP DOING WHAT YOU SHOULD BE DOING AND START DOING WHAT YOU'RE BUILT TO DO.

WEANING oneself away from those activities and behaviors that one has been conditioned to engage in and embrace is one of life's great challenges.

Few people graduate to the place in life where they truly make their own choices. Most of us are bound (and, on occasion, gagged) by what we have been told is the truth - how things really are and how we should adapt our lives and our desires to fit into that antiquated paradigm.

As unappealing as I am attempting to make it sound, this status quo mentality *has* worked for our civilization - we *are* still alive on this planet as a species.

However, the focus in the coaching relationship is on more, much more, than mere survival or status quo. You *can* continue to slog through your days in that adrenaline-producing, personally demeaning job. You *can* make the best of it in a relationship that no longer brings out your best. And you are more than free to live as a highly-advanced couch potato planning your days around illusionary, vicarious vignettes.

But, don't you sense that you are naturally destined to be extraordinary?

Hanging with friends and family who adore you? Mastering your craft and profession to the point of adding to it? Learning how to orient your life to honor *your* core values and qualities?

We are fortunate to have machines which give our hearts and minds a chance to fully express themselves instead of toiling on the earth with our bodies just to get enough to survive for yet another day. You have the luxury of designing your life exactly as you want it, not as your parents had it, not like you should have it, not like others live theirs (chosen or not, probably not).

A coach is a professional who expects you to start telling the truth about what you really want and then helps you get it. And if you are not sure of what you really want, your coach can help you find out what that is for *you*. (Isn't it amazing that so little of our education system helps students see and choose what is best for them in life? Thanks to coaches like Susan Corbett in Jupiter, Florida who teaches a life planning class to teens (who after their initial show-me adolescent stuff, *love the chance to design for themselves rather than resist what they "should" be doing*), more students will have that opportunity.

CLIENT

Swinging the pendulum from the shoulda, oughta, haveta side of life to the wanta, loveta, and choice side takes time - sometimes a lot of time. The first step is to free the pendulum so that it can swing freely to the far side and then settle somewhere in the middle (we'll call that place *choice or responsibility*). The exercises which follow this section will get you started on this path of choice.

This process can be painful and glorious. Basically, you are re-looking at all the stuff you've been told is true to see if it really is true *for you*. Much of it won't be, and in the letting-go process, you may feel the full range of emotions - happy, sad, disturbed, angry, thrilled. Be with these feelings and emotional reactions. (Don't fall into the trap of thinking you *shouldn't* be feeling this way.) Fact is, you will, so surrender to this process. What you are doing is laying the groundwork for a solid foundation on which you can build a sustainable fulfilling life.



IMPLEMENTATION TIP

Try to be appropriate, gentle and compassionate with others and yourself as you swing this pendulum. But give yourself the room and permission to be *bad* and deliciously *selfish* when necessary. Don't be "good" during this shift - be straight in your speaking and do not give up, regardless of the temporary consequences.

EXERCISES

1. On a lined piece of paper, make a list of 25 things about life, yourself, people or circumstances that you are currently **tolerating**. (These may be big or small; important or trivial. Just choose the ones that bug you, good reasons or not. You needn't do anything yet about these; just make the list and share with your coach.)
2. Ask yourself "*Who am I living for, really?*" Is it others, parents' expectations, in order to get something? Stay with this inquiry until you are at peace with your answer. There is no right answer, just the one that empowers you.
3. Make a list of the things in life that you feel you should do or be. (Examples: I should be a good parent, I should love my mean sister, I should show up for work, I should be a good person, I should do more, I should lose weight.)

COACH

You want your clients to be at choice about who they are, how they live and what they do. Choice is an advanced concept sometimes misunderstood as complete freedom to do anything one pleases (*I choose to steal your money*, for example).. Choice can also be called a skill that takes time and practice to master. Your clients will make mistakes as they take the steps necessary to eliminate the tolerations, fine tune or let go of limiting relationships and get to this place of choice. I recommend you keep endorsing and championing the actions they take toward this goal. Be willing to have other goals not be reached and for other problems to surface during this process. This growth step is so critical (and fundamental) that (almost) whatever happens is worth it. Just be sure to warn the client about what might happen, so they can anticipate it when it does.

When the word "if" disappears from your personal lexicon, you have gained a friend - Truth.

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