Finding Fun

The Play Book to move from "Woe Is Me" to "W O W Is Me" —In 10 Liberating Steps

Adventure WEDNESDAYS

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The Play Book to move from "*Woe Is Me*" to "*WOW*" *Is Me* —In 10 Liberating Steps

Adventures are accessible to everyone. You don't need to be a mountain-climbing adrenaholic or a thrill-seeking, globetrotting backpacker. We don't just crave adventure—we actually *need* adventure in our lives. Why?

Adventure can...

- Rediscover joy that comes from small changes in routines
- Foster our ability to get creative
- Sharpen our ability to be able to think on our feet
- Teach us how to turn stress into joy and overreaction into positive actions
- Empower us to be ok with making mistakes and learning from failures

By creating your own mind map to adventure, you take the steps to discover the wonderfulness of being who you are meant to be—your true self! And we're lucky because, despite what you might think, adventure possibilities are all around you. Every single day. The only thing you need is the right guide to help you discover trails to follow. It's easier than you think to get started!

In this Finding Fun Play Book you will find ten concepts created to help you on your journey along with personal stories to inspire you to try different paths. Most important–adventure action steps to motivate you to go after the treasure trove of fun that life has in store!



1. Embrace Courage



Find the courage to take that first step to do something new or different.

Sometimes you feel so stuck, or so mired in responsibilities that you aren't sure how to find the courage to change things up. Sometimes the saying, "Feel the fear and do it anyway" just doesn't motivate you.

Once I discovered that I needed to take myself out on adventures, I admit, I was scared. I didn't (and couldn't) do huge life-changing events like ditching my suburban life to go backpacking in Nepal. You probably feel this too. It's tough to go on expensive trips to "find yourself" when you have so many responsibilities at home.

I had one evening to myself each week when my ex had the kids on Wednesdays. I decided to start with that. I reached out to friends to see if we could do something together—safety in numbers, right? For one reason or another, I couldn't convince anyone to join me. *(Have you had this happen to you?*)

> **I decided that if I was going to discover what I find fun instead of going along with what others find entertaining, it would be better to go by myself.**

At the time, it took courage to embrace this idea. For my very first Adventure Wednesdays outing, I changed things up in small ways:

- I left the office through a different door than usual.
- I walked to Grand Central starting on a different avenue.
- To make it fun, I decided to let the lights dictate when I would cross and which direction.
- I took my time, and noticed the buildings and stores as I walked.

Along the way, I came across a cute, approachable pub on a street I never used before. It was too much for me to stop in that evening, so I decided to go the following Wednesday.

It is understandable if you're nervous about getting started. Courage requires fear, and sometimes fear serves you by keeping you out of danger. Other times, fear limits you. An adventure can be as simple as turning left instead of right on your evening walk. Just like I did in my first adventure, you can begin by just shaking up your routine a bit.

Adventures build upon adventures. Courage to do *one* thing helps you build courage to try something else.

Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

"How do I find the courage to do it myself?"

Here was a time when I was courageous. I did something that made me feel uncomfortable, but I accomplished it anyway:

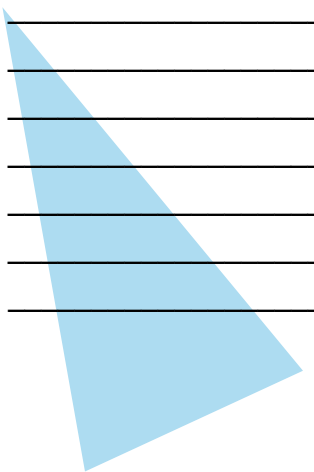
Here's how it felt inside—both emotions and physical sensations:

Action

Here is the step I am going to take today that requires my courage:

FOLLOW UP:

Here is how that step turned out, and the lessons I learned:



2. A B C = Always Be Curious



Allow yourself to indulge in child-like wonder and ask questions about whatever strikes you as interesting.

Asking questions and being open to whatever the answers are, can lead you to interesting places. You may discover a passion you didn't know you had for crafting, driving fast race cars, gardening ancient herbs, or photography. Exploring helps you expand your mind and can lead to shifts in how you see life. As Coco Chanel once said, "to be interesting, be interested."

When I was a child, I wondered, "how did people make the color blue in the old days?" (meaning pre-industrial revolution, even medieval times). One summer at 4H camp, we dyed cloth yellow using dandelions. But what plants or foods make blue? I mean, blueberries stain your fingers purple. When adults gave me blank stares, not knowing the answer or saying to just buy a prefab dye kit, I gave up asking.

> **Culturally speaking, when a child asks a lot of questions, adults tend to excuse them away as being "too much" and the child learns to stop asking about what makes them curious.**



But it's never too late to learn how to pay attention to our curiosity again.

When I came back to this question as an adult, it led to many things. I allowed blue to become not only my favorite color, but a theme in my life. When I bought my own house, I decorated it with all sorts of blues—from the roof to omnipresent wall paint and blue glassware.

During a course on herbal remedies, we ate blue cornflowers. Before a crazy colorful event called the Coney Island Mermaid Parade, I bought a blue wig to wear to it. Later I took a leap and dyed my hair all sorts of blues.

It took a combination of interests to finally discover the answer to my question –in two different heritage gardens: one showcasing plants used in medieval times ('woad'); and another showcasing native plants used by early colonists in Connecticut (*Baptisia Australis*, or Wild Indigo). The next step as a result of this curious question? Who knows? Maybe I will grow some of my own?

The important thing is to keep asking questions. Let them open doors and see where they take you!

Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

What sparks my curiosity?

I am interested in learning more about (list 3 things):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question: "Why not (do a particular thing)?" Here is my answer:

_____

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Question: "What's the worst that could happen?" Here is my answer:

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How do I feel asking these questions?

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_____

Action

Here is one of the things that sparks my curiosity.

(Go down the ‘rabbit hole’ of answering the question until you feel completely satisfied. Commit to this by writing it below.)

FOLLOW UP:

Here is how that step turned out, and the lessons I learned:

3. Start Small

Dip your toe in
the water.
Take a small step…
Yay! You did it!



Creating a new way of looking at life means uncovering how you look at it now, and slowly shifting.

Overwhelm can freeze you when you want to do something that feels worthy of calling it an adventure. However, adventures come in all sizes. Making big life changes works best when you start with small habits.

There are no magic pills, but nothing can change if you don't start somewhere. Start with something easy and build upon that. Like with learning courage, changing your perspective happens when adventures build upon adventures. Baby steps. *You* get to decide what those steps are!

> **Someday, when you keep taking those steps and look back, you'll see the big adventure you've been having, starting with that small thing you did first.**

When I was younger, I never considered myself a good cook. I worked at places where I had access to all sorts of cookbooks, diet experts and recipes—like Random House, at *South Beach Die*t publisher Rodale and Weight Watchers headquarters. So I had plenty of exposure to recipes and diet systems. However, my outlook back then was to focus on the negatives: "I can't cook" turns into "I won't cook," not to mention the diet mantra, "look at all the things I can't eat."

Have you ever gone on a diet and all you can think about are those things on the forbidden list? Do you find it motivational?
In my late 40s, I was diagnosed with a certain health issue, the solution was (along with some meds) changing my diet to "clean eating"—avoiding processed foods and generally sticking with whole foods. As the saying goes, if you want different results, do things differently.

I knew that focusing on the negatives was key to my failures when it came to healthy weight loss and eating habits. **This time, I made up my mind to focus on the positives**. My first step was deciding to take action!



An early baby step was inspired by those cooking shows where they eat crazy foods from all over the world. I went to my supermarket with the intention to find one new-to-me food—another baby step, getting the mindset ready. *My action step?* I bought those funny lemons that look like they have fingers called "Buddha's Hand." Have you seen one of these? Do you know what to do with it? I wasn't sure, but I bought it anyway.

Realizing I wouldn't know how to cook many of the items I was finding, which I considered a self-awareness baby step, I signed up for one of those meal prep services—another action step. Getting packages delivered was a delight and the recipe cards spelled out exactly how to cook the foods.

Have you ever watched the Anthony Bourdain series called "Kitchen Confidential"? I started calling these meal prep adventures "Kitchen Confidence" based on that name. Each successful meal, and even the ones that weren't so great, made me feel more confident in my cooking skills. Eventually I didn't need the prepared kits, and could create my own dishes.

These adventures not only impacted my skills, but deepened my appreciation for those who have a passion for cooking and baking. Expanding my knowledge also gave me more confidence when trying different dishes at restaurants. I had so much fun teaching myself to cook, that I forgot about the foods I "couldn't eat" and entertained myself looking forward to the new things I *could* try!

Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

It's been a long journey, changing my eating habits, and it all started with a small adventure...that first baby step

What is my big vision/idea?

I would like to do the following, but it feels too overwhelming:

What are my feelings about this idea? Name 1-3 of them (or more):

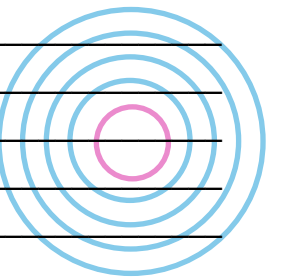
Action

Here is one feeling that seems the most limiting—the most daunting, fear-inducing, stomach-knotting:

I can now break down the big idea into 2-4 parts*:*

IMPORTANT –do not think of it as a "to do" list. To-do lists and the "busy work" aspect of creating them, can be a distraction from staying inspired by your big idea. The goal is to get you started on the path of adventures!

Take a few minutes of quiet time (meditation, time soaking in a bath, on a walk) to imagine your adventure as concentric circles. The center is the big idea, the one that feels overwhelming or unachievable. Imagine the circles surrounding the center are the 2-4 parts you broke down in the earlier step. The outer circles are items you can do now, even if they don't seem immediately related. Once you have these circles visualized, write down up to five of them, no matter how small they seem to you.



1. Pick one (circle it on the page)
2. Commit to doing it
3. Do it

FOLLOW UP:

Here is how that one step felt.

(Does it lead to another? Maybe one that you've written, or a new one?)

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There are times when even reminding yourself to take that first step is hard.

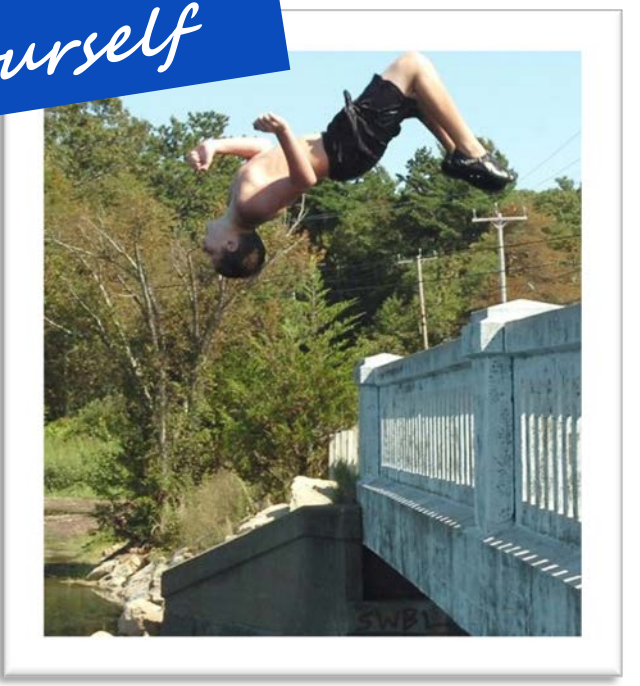
Here's a song that pops into my head, which comes from a childhood memory of a favored holiday show. https://youtu.be/OORsz2d1H7s

Put one foot in front of the other
And soon you'll be walking 'cross the floor
Put one foot in front of the other
And soon you'll be walking out the door…
Put One Foot in Front of the Other



(CREDIT: "Put One Foot in Front of the Other" is from the Rankin-Bass Christmas classic *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*.)

4. Dare Yourself



Sometimes phrasing a challenge or a desire as a ‘dare’ clicks your mind into trying things out of your comfort zone.

“Life is an Adventure. Dare it.” this Mother Theresa quote is my favorite saying; I repeat it so often it’s become a mantra.

Remember the childhood/teenage game “Truth or Dare”? This is not that! It’s not a slumber party game where friends or “mean girls” try to learn embarrassing “truths” about you or dare you to something ‘risky’ or ‘risqué,’ often with the intention to shame you.

> **Learning to dare yourself is all about you. It’s about discovering your own fears. Then finding ways, fun ways, to overcome those limiting fears.**

There is a small creek in Cape Cod with a bridge that crosses over it. Locals have jumped off the bridge into the creek for decades. My sons, natural swimmers and members of the dive team, loved going there. During a particularly bad time in my post-divorce/new relationships era, my kids

convinced me to come with them to the bridge. I inched my way out to the ledge. I gripped the cement wall so hard.

My desire to join my sons in the joy of jumping was greater than my wanting to inch back to safety in shame. I had to find the fear that was keeping me from doing this. I ruled out many of the death-defying type fears—especially poignant as my sons continued the cycle of climbing the wall, jumping into the water with shouts of glee, splashing to the shore and coming back up to do it again.

> **What I realized, as the stones in the cement started making indents in my palms, was that I had a fear of letting go! The way I got motivated was by telling myself if I dare to jump off the bridge, then I can be brave enough to let go of the bad romance. Letting go, cannon-balling down to the water with a gleeful scream was exhilarating, and became a frame of reference for future "letting go" of things that kept me from having fun.**

Don't you worry! Not all dares are extreme, like jumping off a bridge or trapeze or out of a plane. A family friend, Jen, had to get away for an evening from a tense father-in-law. She dared herself to go to dinner alone, something she had never done in her 50+ years! Karen, a former VIP at a major advertising agency and a cancer survivor, dared herself to go to Starbucks and sit there, alone, and be open to talking with strangers. One of my clients decided that one way to allow herself to shine was by wearing less make-up while on vacation with her daughter. The dare was to come out from behind her "mask," with the unexpected reward of having more time to spend doing fun things with her child.



Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

What activity scares me?

Here's a list of 5-7 scary things:

Here are some patterns I find in the above scary things. (What are your underlying fears, based on what scares you?)

This is the biggest fear that feels like it limits me from daring to do something new:

Here are 6 ways (“Adventures!”) that I could try, to shift that fear:

Action

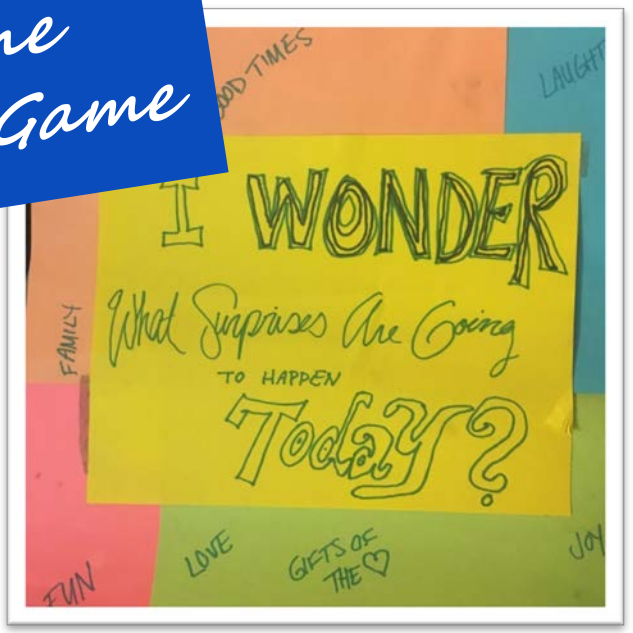
This is just one of the Adventures I dare myself to do now:

Follow Up:

Here is how that step turned out (results, thoughts, feelings):

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5. Play the "I Wonder" Game



Wonder allows you to access something deeper—your imagination and your intuition.

Wonder brings out your inner child, that joy and awe of the world you had when you were young and learning so many new ideas. Wonder also allows you to place faith outside of you and your current knowledge. It allows for curiosity to seep in and questions pour out.

The "I Wonder" game is like a guessing game, but instead of using logic to figure out possible answers, you "feel" the answers**. Use the magic of wonder, and allow your imagination to play.** Go with your gut reactions. Don't have set expectations, and don't try to make a certain outcome happen. Be surprised by what shows up! Start with things that aren't serious and important takes the pressure off. You can have fun and build your confidence as you gain experience with answers and adventures.



Years ago, when I first started having my adventures, I attended a workshop held by Sonia Choquette who teaches how to tap into your intuition by using wonder. She taught us about the concept. An example she used to illustrate how to do this is:

while driving, when you come to a stop light, before looking at the car in the lane next to you, take a breath and use your imagination to guess the color of that car, or maybe even the hair color of the driver. Then look over. Sounds pretty easy and fun, doesn't it?

While I had plenty of opportunities to try this, **I would get frustrated** with the number of times I got the wrong answer. One day I was inspired to create a sign to hang in my bedroom with the words "I Wonder…" written very large, and much smaller different options of what to wonder about. The one that popped up most was "what surprises are going to happen today?"

One Wednesday, with no plans for fun after work, I decided to **let go of controlling the outcome** and let the Universe surprise me. I remember saying that morning "**I wonder what surprise will show up today?"** I "felt" that something was going to happen and had faith in that feeling. I didn't worry about making plans. Later that day, a friend surprised me by inviting me to attend a concert with her that night!



Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

Playing the "I Wonder" game is fun…

It can help you build your inner trust and aid you in recognizing your inside GPS/inner voice/higher power. As you practice, you may see results like living more within your flow or passions or the ability to manifest better outcomes for yourself—like more adventures!

Tap into a memory of when you were younger and felt something positive that you could describe as wonder, like awe or magic. It could be when you asked questions, did something creative or just enjoyed that kites can fly.

I found wonder in:

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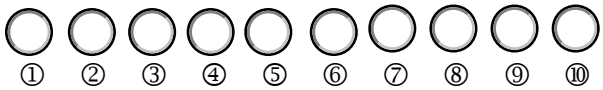
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On a scale of 1-10 *(extremely low to extremely high)*

- What is my level of trust in others?

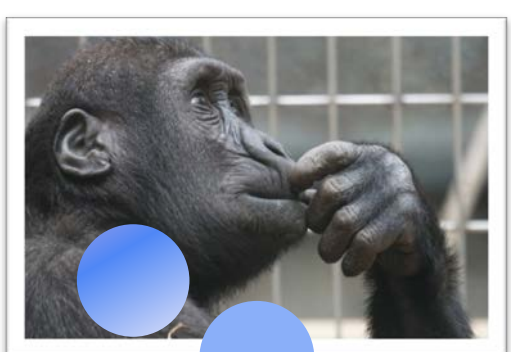


- What is my level of trust in my own decisions?



I have been noticing the use of my “logic” words (like “should,” “I think,” and “figure it out”). I’ve tried replacing them with “I feel” or “I wonder.”
(If it helps, get a notebook to record what you are discussing when you say the logic words, and wonder how it would be different when you use heart-centered words.)

Here are the results of wondering how to replace those words feels:



Action

Commit to a day (write down the date!) and start out the day with the question:

“I wonder what fun will happen today?”

Date: _____

FOLLOW UP:

How did it go? Did you plan it? Did something unexpected show up?

Here is a list of positive outcomes/ new experiences, big and small:

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_____

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How it felt:

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Commit to more “I wonder” games, noting your feelings and any changes.

6. Be Inspired



Inspiration can be the spark to light a new direction.

When you want to do/think/see things differently, but have been doing/ thinking/seeing the same way for so long, it can be a challenge because change is hard, but it's certainly not impossible!

Be inspired by others. Don't go down the envy/jealousy path. Instead, see what it is you want. Give yourself permission to want it, to tell yourself your desires are okay. Don't compare where you are right now with someone else who is "ahead" or "better than" you. Remember, Bill Gates started out working in a garage and Oprah had run away from home early in her life. I hit my rock bottom years ago, feeling stuck, alone and crying on the floor in a helpless puddle.

After a bad romance, I was given advice to watch movies. When I saw scenes that resonated, I paid attention. I made notes on how I wanted to be treated, how I wanted to feel as well as how I wanted to treat myself.

One movie that particularly hit home was “Runaway Bride.” I love Julia Roberts’ easy laugh, and Richard Gere’s heartwarming attitude (his good looks don’t hurt either!). What struck me was the part where he asked “How do you like your eggs?” That concept paralleled my own question “What do I find fun?” Julia and I didn’t have our own preferences. We mirrored the



preferences of those around us instead. Julia cooking all the different egg dishes to discover which one she liked best symbolized for me all the different adventures I would go on to discover what I fun I enjoy the most.

> "I love Eggs Benedict, I hate every other kind. I hate big weddings with everybody staring. I'd like to get married on a weekday while everybody's at work. And when I ride off into the sunset, I want my own horse." A scene from “The Runaway Bride” that showcases Julia Robert’s character Maggie and her choice of eggs. https://youtu.be/de_bA9GXT0o

Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

"Who and/or what inspires me?"

Think of people who are the way you want to be, who do the things you'd like to do, or treat others the way you would like to be treated.

Here are three people I admire (celebrities, historical figures, or people I know):

_____

_____

_____

_____

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These are 2-4 traits/behaviors/actions I admire about them:

_____

_____

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Look at the list of traits/behaviors/actions you've written. Are there any in common? (circle them). Where do you show similarities to these?

Action

Focusing on the positive, write how these inspirations can help you have adventures or reach something you desire.

Here is at least one action I will take:

FOLLOW UP:

Here's how I felt doing that action—trying something or behaving in a new way that was inspired by others:

Does this feeling inspire me to keep trying that type of action?

7. Appreciate



Learning to appreciate (combine wonder, courage, starting small and then add gratitude) can lift your spirits to a higher level.

Sometimes life can become so hectic or filled with busy-ness that it can be easy to forget the good things we do have and take them for granted.

When I was at a low point, some self-help guru talked about finding gratitude. It took courage for me to try this advice. My life felt so low that I had to dig to find things that made me feel grateful. I started with what felt like really small items. At the time, I was unemployed, so my gratitude started with “I’m grateful I have a car to drive my kids to school.” At night, the kids and I made a game of finding what we were grateful for and I added those to my list.

As my list grew, better things appeared. Learning how to make something, such as jewelry, or how to cook a meal, or create an art piece—teaches me appreciation for the craft and others who have mastered it. After scorching a pan of butter, I am grateful I am not a famous chef with hundreds depending on me to create the perfect sauce!

Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

"Gratitude and appreciation help me to be present in the moment."

Look at where you are, what you are doing, and try to look for something you haven't noticed before. Take time to appreciate it and note how it makes you feel. Hold on to the positive emotions, to remember the next time you are not in the world's greatest mood and want to get back to your happy place.



Action

Do something touristy in the area you live in because you never know when you will move away. You will regret not taking advantage of all the things that location had to offer. It will also solidify your feelings of fondness for the area. If a friend came to visit, where would you take him/her? Go do that thing as if you were the out-of-town guest.

FOLLOW UP:

Here is how it went:

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Action

Childlike wonder—let your imagination explore how things are made...stop and smell the roses, find a small stone on the beach, in a river, on the street and take time to feel the textures.

FOLLOW UP:

This is one small item I picked to contemplate with wonder:

_____

_____

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Action

Spend a day finding things to be grateful for, from very small to extreme. Be silly, or take an opposite view. For example: I am grateful for mosquitos because they feed bats, who in turn make guano that is used for expensive compost that grows nutritionally rich foods that I can eat.

This is the date I commit to: _____

FOLLOW UP:

This is what I found:

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This is how being thankful can transform my outlook or perspective in a particular situation:

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8. Turn Negatives Into Positives



You can label something as negative, or you can flip it into a positive. How? This can be a challenge that will take your creativity and determination.

Life may not always be fun, but it doesn't have to be hard. It's all a matter of perspective, or how you choose to react/respond to a situation. Keep at it, and it will become a new habit. Keep asking the questions, and new doors will open.

During my corporate career, I was in advertising sales. It was my job to overcome objections—to turn "no" into "yes" to make money. If a client said there weren't many of his competitors in the magazine, you turned that around and said that their product would stand out and they'd be a leader. How do *you* look at sales—as "smoke and mirrors" (hiding or distracting from negatives) or as "finding which truths to highlight" (finding the positives to focus on)?

It took me years to realize I could apply this concept of finding the positives to my own life, to my personal way of thinking. Failures were no longer mistakes to beat myself up about but rather “lessons to be learned.” Frustrations became challenges to find new ways to do things.

While filling out school scholarship forms for my son, which was frustrating to me, I decided that instead of complaining about the application process, I said I was having “an adventure in college financing.” By shifting my perspective and using positive words, I was then able to see how I was facing my money fears while learning a valuable skill.

The Native Americans have a tradition called the “Rule of Six”: which means it is required that the people involved in a “problem” come up with six different solutions. Often, one of the later solutions is much more agreeable than the first.

Looking at things from different perspectives can also be done physically. I was reminded of this when I accidentally lost a pen cap in a coffee shop. I was in my seat, looking all around for it, with no luck. Then I remembered the “different perspective” and got up, moved away from my table and faced my seat. Surprisingly, my pen cap had bounced its way three tables over. Something I wouldn’t have discovered if I hadn’t changed my perspective!



Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

Take a day, and write down all the times you negatively think about yourself. No judgements, just write them down.

Here are the top three things I say to myself:

This is a current situation that makes me mad/frustrated/sad?

Write that situation from six other perspectives *(imagine you are other people, and how they would see it).*

Who are those people?

What are their viewpoints on your situation?

What would they suggest you do?

Looking at these different answers makes me feel…

Action

After these steps, this is my own new, positive version of the above situation:



9. Self-Care is Not Selfish



You're more able to help others if you're first taking care of yourself, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Our culture emphasizes hustle and hard work, where being "productive" and go-go-go are the ideal. However, if you keep this up for too long, you'll end up exhausted or worse, burned out. Do you do this? Feel like you are existing instead of living?

It takes courage to take 'me time.' Self care can be empowering. You know how easy it is to fall into the trap of emails and reacting to notifications, right? This feeds into the "busy-ness" of the day, making us into human "do-ings" instead of human "be-ings."

> **Self care can be as easy as taking ten minutes of quiet time, no electronics, relaxing and focusing on breathing.**

Tap into your feelings, allow room for them. Learn about your authentic self and trust your inner thoughts more. As much as we want to think that desire

and hustle are enough to get us through, they're not. Pretending to be strong all the time won't last. True strength comes from inside. **Self-care isn't selfish, it's a *must* in the balance of life.**

As a mom (even if you're a parent to fur babies), it's easy to put others first. Remember the old TV ad where they touted that as a woman you could bring home the bacon and cook it too? Meaning, we not only "could" do it all, it was expected that working women *should* do it all. For years, the stats were that women who worked outside the home basically had two jobs—their paid career and the one at home (cleaning, caring for the kids, etc).

For years I was that woman, and I was proud of it. I didn't see that the extra weight was due to stress. It was just another way to tell myself I wasn't "good enough." I was bad at diets, bad at exercising, bad at organizing my schedule to squeeze it all in. I even remember asking my doctor if my lapses of memory (in my early 30s) was due to Alzheimer's! He said no, it was stress and that as the kids grew it would get easier.

The first time I remember fighting for "me time" was after I had separated from my children's father. We split up the weeknights. One of the nig hts I went to a meeting that was helping me recover. I remember having such a hard time setting the boundaries— declaring that this night was mine—no interruptions. But my need to recover was greater than my past habit of giving in to take care of others. **Self-care is a winding journey—it takes many paths.**

I was downsized from a big corporate job a few years back. It was not a fun job, and I felt more stress than at any other job. I was happy to be let go! Two months later, I was diagnosed with a form of chronic stress syndrome. All those years without self-care came roaring back at me! My body was giving out and I had to learn radical self-care.

Do you see any signs that not taking care of yourself might be connected to your overall well-being and the well-being of those around you? Learning self-care is an adventure when you have to risk challenging your self-perceptions of being a good parent, a good worker, a good spouse, etc. But when you **realize you're worth it and start taking care of yourself, everyone benefits!**

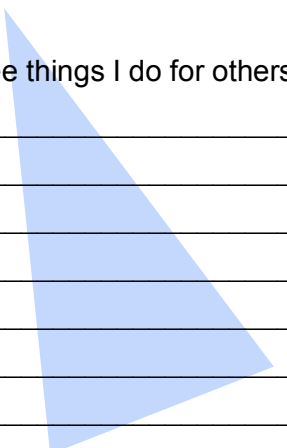


Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

Here is a list of all my good points:

Three things I do for others:



Three things I do for myself:

Action

Commit to taking at least 10 minutes a day for one week—of just doing nothing. Turn your TV, phone and emails off. Sit quietly, focus on your breathing. Thoughts will come, let them. Be okay with letting them drift off. Pay attention to what comes up for you.

This is the date I started: _____

FOLLOW-UP:

Here is what the experience was like to do nothing for the time I allotted:

_____

_____

_____

This is how I feel:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Were you able to practice every day? (If not, that's ok! The goal is to be willing and to keep trying.)

Do you feel more open to trying new things?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. Let Go of the Outcome



Stress, fear, doubt and tension come from you wanting control, from an attachment to the outcome, to how things will turn out.

Do you start a new project or a new exercise plan but get tense and stressed if it doesn't meet some specific goal? Maybe you feel doubtful, or want everything to be perfect. Do you trust others to help, or do everything yourself to meet your standards?

What if the outcome matters? I was in sales where we always had goals to achieve. You may also experience the need to hit a specific, measurable objective at work. So of course you need to focus on the outcome, right? But what if you put your focus on the actions and steps that are most likely to *get you* that outcome? What if you open yourself up to the idea that maybe things will come out better than your wildest dreams? This is where I find the best adventures happen!

In sales, I could give you hundreds of stories where I was attached to the outcome, the sale of some product my management wanted me to sell to bring in a certain revenue level. I'm sure you have work stories too. In my personal life, I discovered when I went after a certain goal—specifically to be in a relationship—the outcome often ended up being unhealthy for me. I attached to the outcome that I must be in a relationship to be happy. I kept

trying to control the situations or change the people to meet this goal. Those were poor choices!

> **When I started to learn about letting go, or releasing expectations, was also when I started taking myself on adventures.**

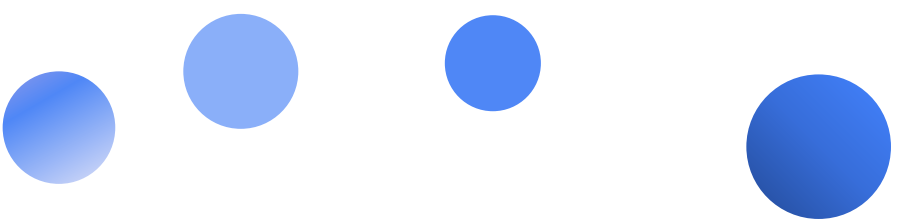
I purposefully stated that a relationship was not the goal, but learning about myself and what I liked was my goal. I 'let go' of needing the relationship by stating "If someone shows up while I'm having fun, all the better. I'm having fun either way."

Then one Wednesday, I had an adventure where I went to a speed date event at a yoga studio. My intention was not focused on meeting Mr. Right (or even Mr. Right-now), but to see what the event was like and possibly have a funny story to share about later. I enjoyed the moments of the event –the different types of people, the unexpected questions (and some of the very intriguing answers), and the energy of the group.

Of the eight men, I only had an interest in one. When the event was over, he was laughing with one of the other women. The fact that there was even one person I would consider was already beyond my expectation, so it was with a smile that I left the event without "worrying" about whether I was good enough to find someone to date. Attaching to outcomes can mean you have self-doubts and fears of the future.

Does this sound like a failure to you? That I went to a speed date and left without any leads? This is where non-attachment comes into play, and that sometimes things happen beyond your wildest dreams. Turns out, that one guy I had an interest in also had an interest in me! We now have been together for six years, building adventures together as well as on our own.

Letting go of the outcome is freeing. It helps us to be more present in the moment. And when you are being present, or being in the moment, it's easier not to think of, or try to control, the outcome.



Adventure Action Step

Now it's your turn:

This is what keeps me up at night; and what things I worry about:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

When someone tells you to 'let go' —how does it make you feel?

A) Confused about what they mean by letting go
B) It makes you want to hold on tighter
C) It makes you wonder if letting go would be a good solution
D) It makes you consider why they want you to let go,
and see if it makes sense. If it does, it feels like a Yes.
E) It depends on what issue that someone is talking about,
so, all of the above

I have identified 2-5 times or issues that made me feel *not* in control?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This is one thing that worries me.

The worst thing that could happen is:

Is that true? _____

(Circle those that are just in your imagination or are very real.)

Write out how you currently define what “letting go” means to you. (If the song “Let it Go” from *Frozen* comes up, hum it while you write. Maybe it will inspire you?)



Here are some ideas for you to consider to help you let go of those worries:

- **Guatemalan Worry Dolls.** According to legend, children are taught to assign a worry to one of these little dolls, and put them under their pillow at night. By morning the dolls will have gifted them with the wisdom and knowledge to ease their worries.
- **Create a "God Box."** This is a special container where you deposit worries, concerns or desires written on a piece of paper. In a sense, you are writing a prayer to God* expressing what is in your heart so there is no right or wrong way to do this. By writing it down and placing it in a box, you are allowing yourself space and time to let the issue alone. Your intention is to set the worry in the box, not in your head. This opens you up to alternative solutions and outcomes, some which may be better than you originally thought!
- *You may call it Universe, Allah, Hera, stars above, or any entity you consider, as long as it's a power greater than you. Not trying to push my version of God, just offering a tool that could help you learn to let go!*
- **Be present in the moment.** This may be new to you, and from my experience can take time and practice. Notice where you are right now. What are the details that are around you? How can you appreciate or be grateful for these details? You can be present with people too. Listen to them without planning your next statement. Focus on your connection with them and, depending on the project, focus on helping them enjoy the process more.
- **Do something physical.** Dance to joyful music to shake it off. Take a trapeze class (or something similar) where you literally have to "let go." Getting rid of physical tension helps you get back to a place where you are more open to detaching from the outcome.
- **Do something goofy or wear something outrageous on purpose.** In public. This is for the non-theatrical people, who aren't used to acting in different roles. Moving out of your comfort zone by dressing in an "extreme" manner can help shift your perspective on something that has been bothering you.



Action

This is the idea (from the above list) I want to try first:

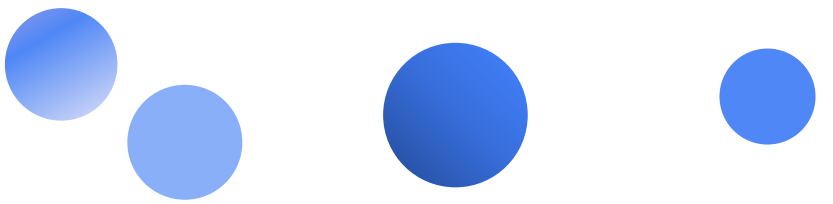
Here's another idea I want to try:

This is how I want to do the action I selected:

FOLLOW-UP:

How did it feel to try the above exercise?

Write 3 ways you can integrate one or more of these choices into a regular habit:



Congratulations! You are ready to take the next steps in your journey to stop yearning for more and find fun now! Let's celebrate together:



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