



INTEGRATE TO LIVE

Restore Resilience. Cultivate Community. Impact your World

Week 48 Transcript: Imperfectly Extraordinary

This week, we continue the reclamation process of unleashing our true identity by receiving permission to be imperfectly extraordinary. For all of eternity, the existential questions of humanity have been: “who am I?” and “why am I here?” followed by “am I enough?”

Currently, there is a cultural conversation that welcomes the exploration of identity and what it looks like to fulfill our purpose in this lifetime. This is good news for our community as we are venturing to express the fullness of who we are to the world around us.

Though this cultural discourse has made this discovery process commonplace, we’ve labeled our True Self in too small of a box. I believe there is too much emphasis put on always, and only, being our best, most epic Self.

As a culture we’ve decided this means: always philanthropic, always making the world a better place, always looking amazing in my Selfie while I do it and always living the dream. Always beautiful, flawless, smart, successful and powerful and always making it look easy.

Yet, the fullest expression of who we are is imperfect. It has shadowy, broken aspects and weak and vulnerable pieces. It also has very bright, beautiful and brilliant parts. Some days it’s mundane and other days it’s exciting.

I want to push back a little around this concept of life always being an extraordinary journey and offer a yes/and. Yes, everyone is exceptional, beautiful with limitless human potential AND we all carry the impact of embracing the challenges of living on this marred planet and experiencing the wounding life brings.

We were designed for vulnerability. The definition of vulnerability is: to be susceptible or open to wounding. This means we will be wounded; we will experience loss, suffering and pain.

I want to challenge this cultural ideal with the possibility that our wounded vulnerability is beautiful, too. What if that is success? What if it speaks to some of the value of the life we have lived?



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Living an extraordinary life is about embracing our whole identity. Everything we've gone through speaks to our lived experience, it is a reflection of who we are, and is part of the larger story of redemption that we find ourselves in. Carrying the fullness of our stories is essential in the fulfillment of our purpose.

If we had to boil it down, there's a part of us that feels deeply rejected and/or abandoned in our relationships, lack of relationships, experiences and lack of experiences. But, what creates the deepest wound is when we then abandon ourselves.

I wish I had opportunity to share the more intimate details of my story over a coffee with each of you, and maybe someday we will, but the day I recognized that I had rejected myself changed everything for me.

In that moment, I acknowledged the truth that I didn't actually know that anything was truly going to change in the life circumstance I had been given to endure. I wasn't certain that the things I wished weren't true of my experience in life were ever going to be different. Though I believed, it was unknown.

But, I recognized that I could choose to embrace my life as it is today, with all my unwanted identities and all the unresolved challenges in my story. And, that I could stop rejecting myself. I decided to sit in the reality of my life, as it was in that moment, and welcome myself.

If we can't choose to be in our life, as it is today, we'll never experience the depth of joy. Because joy is only experienced in the moment.

Coming into deep, radical acceptance is where we discover the deepest joy. When we're living for a different moment than the one that we've been given, we are always waiting to experience our life somewhere in the future.

Maybe when this hard circumstance resolves, maybe when I feel more comfortable in my skin, maybe when life doesn't seem so hard. This way of living creates the experience of joy that is always just outside of our reach. But, the moment I am living in right now is the only reality that I have.



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I think the mix-up in our cultural conversation around identity is that we've confused our best, most epic Self with our Idealized Identity. In doing so, it creates a pressure to fulfill extraordinary dreams that leads to performing and paralyzes peoples' attempts at doing one or two small things that could have a long-lasting, positive impact.

Cultivating reality based hope sometimes requires we give up on some dreams so we can discover new ones. It requires we build our choices on a clear understanding of reality. This is not popular thinking, but is substantially supported scientifically in the fascinating read, "Supersurvivors" by David B. Feldman and Lee Daniel Kravetz.

They explore what successful survivors do when stressful events land a huge obstacle in their path. Instead of practicing the positive thinking, "everything will be fine," they begin to realistically ask the daunting question, "what now?"

I can assure you, being a resilience and trauma expert was not my highest dream. I became one because I spent the majority of more than two decades of my life trying to not die from an undiagnosed, debilitating environmental disease.

I could have completely lost my ambition to do something meaningful with my life by spinning my wheels thinking positively and trying to be my best, most epic self. Instead, I bravely asked, "what now?" "What can be dreamed from this place?"

Our journey of reclamation has been one of integration. I'd like to end this video with a poem by Kahlil Gibran entitled *On Joy and Sorrow*.

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.

And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears.

And how else can it be?

The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain.

Is not the cup that holds your wine the very cup that was burned in the potter's oven?



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And is not the lute that soothes your spirit, the very wood that was hollowed with knives?

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy.

When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.

Some of you say, "Joy is greater than sorrow," and others say, "Nay, sorrow is the greater." But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits, alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.

Verily you are suspended like scales between your sorrow and your joy.

Only when you are empty are you at standstill and balanced.

When the treasure-keeper lifts you to weigh his gold and his silver, needs must your joy or your sorrow rise or fall.

Be inspired to embrace the yes/and reality of your imperfect, and extraordinary, Self. And, be sure to download the action guide to support this process as you share what you are learning on our group page.