

Find Your Passion In Life

**How to Get UNstuck, Find Your Purpose, and Start
Living Life As An Exclamation Point!**

By Remy Chausse

*Bestselling author of
“Living Life As An Exclamation Point!”*

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Praise For “Find Your Passion in Life”

Remy, you hit the nail on the head. I would recommend everyone looking to live their life to the fullest should read this book. Live today, as tomorrow is promised to no one.

Sandra Lee Williams, Business Success Coach
Wealthy Woman Living Internationally, LLC
<http://www.wealthywomanolivinginternationally.com/>

Encore, Remy, Encore! Your second book is even deeper and richer in wisdom with more heart, more inspiration and more energy! This book provides useful techniques and effective tools that will support everyone to have more passion in their life!

Julie Ann Zolfo
Core Energy Coach and Creator of the Fulfillment Factor Formula
<http://juliezolfo.com/>

“I highly recommend *Find Your Passion In Life*. Remy brings you definitions, exercises, and examples from a place of “just wondering” to a place of “discovery and exclamation” showing the reader with ease that there is always time to discover your life purpose and live a great life.”

Esther Coronel de Iberkleid
“The Clarity Mentor” - Life Changing Coach
www.clarityconfidenceandselfesteemnow.com
Helping and guiding Healing Arts Practitioners, Educators, Independent Practice Professionals become aware of their life purpose and learn how to build a business online

***Find Your Passion in Life* is filled** with terrific stories, thought provoking insights and powerful exercises. It's one of those books that keeps you fully engaged from beginning to end. Thank you Remy for showing us how to find our true purpose and giving us the confidence to make it happen!

Joyce Layman Blackburn
Chief Dot Connector at Mind By Design
<http://www.joycelayman.com/>

“I have worked with individuals and groups on their vision, values and purpose for over twenty years and haven't seen anything as powerful as Remy's method for helping people get to the heart of their passion. Easy to pick up and devour, the book is brimming with powerful insights and practical tips. One of my favorites - creating your Inner Board of Directors. Brilliant. This book will become an important part of my work from now on.”

Deborah Pruitt, Ph.D.
Speaker. Consultant. Author.
<http://www.groupalchemy.net>
Forthcoming book:
Group Alchemy: The Six Elements of Highly Successful Collaboration

“This work hits the bullseye with an exclamation point!! Your profoundly simple step by step guide to finding happiness comes at the perfect time. We are ready, now more than ever, to live truthfully and with purpose, and Remy makes it possible. The world is waiting for each of us to step up and

answer our calling by asking the age old questions at the core of every heart. *Find Your Purpose In Life* is a must read and I will absolutely recommend it to all my clients.”

Valerie Sorrentino

"Live life with ease"

<http://www.lifeenergycoach.com/>

"It's my belief that "Clarity is Divinity" and so when I read Remy Chausse's latest work I was really inspired . . . not only by her clarity in expressing some powerful principals that really do work to help people get UNstuck, but also by her immediately useful suggestions and practices for me as the reader to be empowered in coming to my own clarity in so many areas where I personally have found myself stuck! I especially loved her sections on finding energy and discovering values. When we are masters of our own energy and clear on what it is we value we automatically start living our purpose with a BIG EXCLAMATION POINT!!! Thanks, Remy, for your great work in the world. Please keep it coming, Love!"

Amethyst Wyldfyre, The Speakers Shaman & Empress of Empowerment

Multidimensional Mentoring, Magic, Medicine and Mastery

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<http://theempoweredmessenger.com/>

“Are you ready to ‘Start Living Life As An Exclamation Point!’? Then welcome to your guidebook filled with great insight, wisdom and compassion. Delve in, take action, and let Remy hold your hand as she walks you through how to move forward to create a life filled with passion and purpose. Life is a blessing, each minute matters; you matter and you deserve a meaningful life that is full of exclamation points! Don’t waste another minute, continue reading and create the life of your dreams.”

Janice Stefanus

The Breakthrough Strategist

Customer First Strategies, LLC

<http://www.customerfirststrategies.com/>

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Introduction

Who am I?

Why am I here?

What does life mean?

What is the purpose of life?

These are some of the big questions in life, the ones philosophers and religious leaders and all kinds of seekers spend their lives fasting and praying and searching the globe trying to answer.

In a way, I guess I'm one of those people. But I see those big questions as something else: they're really asking something deeper . . .

Am I living life full out?

Do I have heart throbbing, mind blowing, life altering love in my life?

Do I matter?

Am I making a difference?

Answer these questions, and you'll know exactly who you are and why you're here.

Many of us struggle, day to day, filling time and getting by while we dream and wish for something *irresistible*. We feel guilty when we indulge in our passions because we worry about how it conflicts with our responsibilities. We think that somehow, living up to others' expectations, fulfilling others' needs, and following the standard path is what we need to be doing.

The reality is, it is our passions that help us find our purpose in life. That's our responsibility! And when we begin to fulfill our purpose, the universe responds with prosperity and abundance!

But we can't just indulge in our passions without direction, either. We need guidance, and that guidance is our values. That's what this book is all about: identifying our passions and values so we can live a purpose infused life!

When we know our values and how to find our passion in life, and live according to those values and passions, we actually turn those question marks into exclamation points! That's why my national bestselling book is called, "Living Life As An Exclamation Point!"

(www.LivingLifeAsAnExclamationPoint.com)

Defining Values and Passions

Passions are what we want, while values are who we are and what we stand for. But how do we determine exactly what our values and passions are in the first place? This is an exciting, almost addictive topic!

To start, let's define values. Basically, *values* describe what's important to an individual. Our values are our compass. They can be ethical or moral values, political or religious values, social values, or even one of my personal favorites, aesthetic values.

Where values are who we are, *passions* are what we want, which makes them kind of like values on steroids. They're the things that make us jump out of bed in the morning and keep us up way longer than we should be at night. And they also offer a big, big clue as to what makes me *me*, and you *you*.

That doesn't necessarily mean we think about our passions all that often. Some people think that passions are "indulgent" and just go through their day doing what they think they're supposed to in a robotic, *going through the motions* approach to life.

Others, especially people who are feeling lost, or depressed, or down, can lose touch with their passions, sometimes without even realizing it. But without passions, we're missing a big part of ourselves. When we lose our passions, we lose touch with our soul, which defines who we are. Our life force just goes away.

But what's even more important than passions? It's our life purpose. I believe we all have passions in our life, but more than that we have a purpose for being here. We weren't put on this Earth to struggle, or even just survive. We were given one unique strength, and that uniqueness IS our purpose.

Do You Know What Your Purpose Is?

Finding out why we're here and what we're supposed to do with our life isn't about the *finding part*. It's about *creating* our life. When we ask ourselves, "What is my purpose?" we're asking, "Who do I want to be and how can I make a difference?" It's the secret sauce of life!

So if you feel like something's missing in life, but you can't put your finger on it . . . if you're looking to move beyond basic survival and comfort and into making a difference while you're here on this Earth . . . then join our community at <http://remychausse.com/blog/> where you can begin to uncover your own unique message to the world, your own natural energy, your top passions . . . and find the purpose infused life that you're meant to live!

What Is Your Gift?

We're all put here specifically and uniquely to do something that we were made for. As we all probably know by now, my absolute passion is helping you find yours, and then really helping those who are experts in making a difference in this world, helping us all to get our message out. That's what we're doing here in this book; we're looking for your *ooooh aaaah!*

Identifying our gifts takes a little bit of work, but don't worry! We just have to be honest with ourselves about who we are, what we love and what we believe is possible in our lives.

I want to take a look at something that I know can just catapult us in getting our passions and purpose out into the world and rock our pocketbook with affluence! I've had money, and I've not had money, and I tell you . . . having it is better! I want to set us up to create our own personalized path to wealth.

Do What You Love

We find happiness in direct proportion to doing what we love. If we aren't doing what we love, don't we die a little each day?

I found this to be true when I transitioned out of my real estate career. I was a top producing agent for quite some time, with awards and statues, and all kinds of celebrity. I held the customer service award year after year after year. You'd think it was my calling, right? After all, I was successful by all modern standards of the term. I had money, awards, prestige . . . even a certain level of fame! But real estate was a "love hate" relationship for me. I hated it and I loved it, all at the same time.

And there's something I learned about relationships a long time ago. They aren't 50/50. They're 100/100. So if I 50% loved it, and 50% hated it, the part of me that loved it got eaten up 100%! That's what was making me die a little each day. Make sense?

It's true in love and work relationships, too. If our partner is only there 50%, doesn't that just eat up all our energy as we try to compensate for the 50% they aren't there?

Insight #1: Begin to look at those things that are 50/50 in life. And see if they can be improved to 100%.

One of the first steps in finding our passions and purpose in life, and finding our own personalized path to affluence, is learning to listen to the truth of who we are, which means finding that purpose that is 100% *you!* This is the transformation I try to provide with every program: that you find out who you are and what you stand for. And it takes *you* being honest with *you*.

Challenge What's Possible

When I say that we can increase our relationships to 100% and our income tenfold (yes, tenfold!) it IS possible, believe me. Because that's very real when we're living the life we're meant to live. I want us to begin to connect with that, right now, today. And challenge what's possible! That's both a tip AND a little inspiration!

Insight #2: To be truly successful, challenge what's possible!

We know we have a purpose for being here, and maybe we even have more than one mission to complete in our lifetime. But for so many people, they don't know what their purpose is, and this breaks my heart. With limitless possibilities in front of us, sometimes we need help bringing clarity to our vision, and our vision to reality.

This is the heart of my program. So let's see if we can get a grasp on what those possibilities are!

What's Possible?

Let me ask this question: What's possible once we know our passions and our purpose? What *are* the possibilities?

If *anything* is possible . . . then what does that leave out?

In one statement . . . it's possible for us to create a vision, bring that vision to reality, and live the life we're meant to live! It's also about our soul's journey, and knowing what that is. It's about living our *legacy*. And creating stunning new possibilities! We need to find our inner horsepower . . . our natural energy . . . our inner genius . . . and we need to learn how to ask the *right* questions, to get the *right* answers. We need to see the difference between illusions, and the truth that's underneath an illusion. These are all the aspects of creating a vision, and bringing that vision to reality. That's why I'm here! That's my purpose for you!

A Blessing In Disguise

I remember a recent client I had, who had been married for over 20 years and her husband just up and left. Can you imagine? But this is really a very common story that I hear. She had always been a stay at home mom and never had to support herself out in the world. She had no clue what she was going to do, and she was in a panic.

We sat down and discussed her passions in life. We went a little deeper to find her purpose. And she discovered that she was really meant to help people with transitions: transitioning in or out of marriage, transitioning through empty nest syndrome, transitioning and adjusting into a new career. Her true calling was helping people adjust through a transition. It was all over her language, and she couldn't even see it!

Suddenly this client realized that the hardship she was going through, a divorce after 20 years, was there for a reason. There was a usefulness to it. With it came the experience and knowledge to help her to help others. This is the kind of genius that's living inside all of us!

Insight #3: Part of our responsibility is to teach others what *we* learn, and to help *them* grow. It's irresponsible not to! This increases our energy (and theirs) beyond measure, and is also the highest and best use of our journey: to make a difference for others.

Does this sound like a really deep discussion? Does it sound difficult? Do you wonder if you can do this, too? Don't worry! The steps laid out in this book will get you started on your own path. I'm here to guide you through each step! And I'll bet you have a close friend who can help you, too.

Insight #4: It helps to have a buddy when we're identifying our passions. They can help spot the languaging patterns that we can't hear in our own head.

Our life experiences help to prepare us for the purposes we are to serve in life, but we can't always see them for ourselves. This is where a buddy comes in! Other people in our lives often see the wonderful things that we are capable of, even when we don't. Especially when we don't! When we take the time to talk about our lives with others, we can often find that purpose deep within!

Our Inner Board of Directors

I've also had people sit with me and develop their own Inner Board of Directors, and then slide right out of their problems in an instant. Suddenly the answers appeared right before them, simply because they learned how to take on the perspective of a particular board member and come up with the *right* question to get the *right* answer. It's kind of magical! We'll be doing my wickedly popular exercise on how to create our own Inner Board of Directors a little later.

What if your purpose has already been completed?

I remember working with a gal who was embroiled in a fight with two other people at work. Her manager was ignoring some things that needed to be handled, and a coworker was spreading rumors about her. It was difficult because she felt a certain loyalty to both of them. But after sitting down and doing one of these exercises that I'll show you with her Inner Board of Directors, the solution unfolded, right before her eyes.

As it turned out, the purpose she had once identified for being in that job had been completed! It was complete . . . *totally* complete. She no longer had a purpose for being there. Not only that, but she also discovered that she wasn't a follower, rather, she was a leader. She hadn't even recognized this. So she left the organization and developed her own new business. It was such the right move for her, that her new team materialized right before her eyes and she made almost *six figures* in a matter of months.

You see, she was fighting for how it *should be*. But it wasn't about the fight with these two people. That was the illusion. She was fighting for her new truth: that she was a leader; that she was meant for more. Make sense? This is what's possible from doing this work. Determining when your purpose has been completed, and when it's time to identify something new, so that you're always infused with purpose.

Insight #5: When you are living a purpose infused life, it becomes effortless. When you're headed in the right direction, *when you've got it right*, the money flows.

Inner GPS

I'll be demonstrating how to watch for the guideposts that are giving us very clear feedback. Because making almost six figures in a matter of months is undeniable feedback from the universe that we're on the right course!

What we're talking about here is our inner GPS. I'll illustrate how to follow our hearts, instead of the *thinking, thinking, thinking* that our head wants us to do. We must get out of our heads! Our heart doesn't confuse us. It always knows what's right for us, if we ask the right questions.

Insight #6: Sometimes when *thinking, thinking, thinking* begins to make us *crazy, crazy, crazy* . . . we can close our eyes, and put our hand over our heart. It's surprising how quickly that turns off the mind chatter.

This technique might seem almost too simple. But that's the genius of it! Simply sit still for a few moments and concentrate on your breath. Concentrate on your heartbeat. Focus on creating a slow, deep rhythm. In just a few minutes, you'll feel your body calm down, and you'll be come more relaxed! And your *mind* will settle, as well!

Once your mind is quiet, it is much easier to find focus, to think through the possibilities, and create your vision. Creating a crystal clear *purposeful* vision, and bringing that vision to reality . . . that's pretty exciting, right? That's what's possible from this work!

Is This eBook Right For You?

This is for you if . . .

You know you're meant for greater things, but can't quite put your finger on what that is.

You thought you'd pinpointed what you're supposed to do with your life, but the universe isn't bringing you any money.

You've outgrown your life, or life threw a transition at you, and you're asking "NOW what?"

You have a fear of becoming irrelevant. Boy, this one is HUGE for the guys reading this.

When I was researching men, one thing I heard over and over is, "I don't have the luxury to figure out what my purpose in life is."

But how can we NOT have the luxury? It created such pain for me to hear that. We'd be doing ourselves and the planet a disservice to not show up in the life we're meant to live. Most of the guys said they'd be willing, even hungry, to take a weekend retreat to explore this subject.

You may not yet be ready for such an intensive exploration, but maybe this book will help start the adventure. I created this eBook, and all of my other products like the free teleclass at www.FindYourPassionateLife.com), because I had to relieve my own pain. I had to try to help people who felt like they didn't have the luxury to explore their own meaning in life and why they're here, and that's why I started these programs. Maybe that sounds selfish?

So, my job is to inspire the passionate *you* to ignite the vision within, and unleash your legacy on the world! How does that sound? If it sounds excellent, then you are in the right place!

This isn't for you if you aren't ready to make a change.

If it seems too scary right now, if you just aren't ready to confront your greatness, that's okay. Just be careful about staying in status quo. Even though we may not mean to, most people's natural instincts are to fight for the status quo. Subconsciously, we work to keep things as they are, even if they aren't the way we want them to be.

You see, we like our *stories*. Even when we're miserable, we find a certain comfort in knowing what to expect of each day. Think about how many people you know who complain about their job, their partner, their house . . . their lives! But when you suggest a change, they say, "Oh, I can't do that! At least for now, I know what the problems are and how to deal with them!"

Insight #7: Be careful about staying in status quo. Because in actuality, it means we're shrinking.

Status quo is our worst enemy when we're stuck in something we don't want to be in. We cling to the "way things are" because we're more afraid of change than we are of facing old patterns. But those patterns slowly destroy our soul. They pull us away from our purpose. And if we're not careful, we lose sight of our purpose entirely! If that rubs you the wrong way, then let's look at . . .

What You Can Expect?

In this book, we're going to cover these five areas:

How to discharge the emotional charge that may be a predominant force right now and find inspiration again. Yes, this is the brief section on overcoming invalidation.

How to get to know our own natural energy, our intuition, our knowingness, and find the genius in it.

How to easily see possibilities in the snap of a finger, and honor our inner wisdom. This is where we'll cover passions and values. My desire is for you to be able to break out of ordinary, whatever ordinary is for you, and get to that next level of greatness.

How to explore our evolution, so it can unfold without grasping at it or using some obsessive drive to make it happen. This is my fun little section on our Inner Board of Directors. And I think you'll love it.

How to begin to develop a guided roadmap . . . this is where we begin to talk about the Big Daddy: Purpose.

Partnership

I also want to take a minute to share a mindset, and that's the mindset of partnership. I am truly here to serve, and to help us get greater things out of life. That's why I'm here. It's my purpose. I can't turn it off!

We all have a purpose. We all have a message for the world. And each of us is like a pebble in a pond. The ripples that spread out from all of us getting out there with our messages is going to have a massive effect on the planet because people *need* what we do!

So partnership is coming from that place. I'm your friend who supports this endeavor and cares about it deeply. I want to share information that will make a difference, and a knowledge that will help you move farther and faster. If you're committed to that . . . if you're ready to take those actions . . . then you're ready to dive right in!

Or maybe you're just sticking a toe in water?

So you need to know that I'm committed, but not attached. What I mean is that throughout this book you will get a taste of my home study course called *Unleash The Vision Within* and I'm committed to giving you everything I can here. But I'm not attached to whether you move forward into any of my other programs. I know if you take advantage of the home study course with any bonuses and special offers and amazing incentives, that's awesome! You will find many more opportunities to find your passions and values and develop your purpose!

But I also know that if you decide to think about it and come back later, that's okay, too. The bonuses may not still be there, but the program will still be worth it, 100%. Either way, I'll still be here for you, through my blog and social media. I'm always here.

Moving Forward

Are you reading this eBook because you're eager to move forward in your life? Maybe you're at a crossroads: a point where you don't quite know what direction to choose. Maybe you don't want to just blindly search for the answers. Maybe you're seeking guidance and looking for a way to determine the *right* path.

So, here's a tip: when standing at a crossroads, always choose in favor of your passions and values. I want to see us all moving forward in our passions and purpose, and a full blown transformation! That's our *zsa zsa zoo!*

So there will be a lot of little tools here, and they can be used immediately to increase our level of passion and purpose . . . even income, which I'm sure we all want! And then you can keep going even further with this, if you want to, and I'll tell you more about that later.

I know that we sometimes wonder if we're on the right path, and we're questioning our life. We sometimes say, "I'm so over it . . . walking around in a fog, with no real direction." We sometimes feel embarrassed, confused, kind of tired of it all. Embarrassed because we know we're meant for greater things. Confused because we aren't sure what that greater thing is. Tired of it all because it's begun to feel monotonous or just so ordinary.

I know that can create some pain, because I've lived it. I've had question marks circling over my head, and if you know me, you know how I feel about those question marks!!!

I have people from all over the world who say, "Your story is my story." Maybe you can say the same thing. I know that we all get to a point where we know we want something more in life. Or maybe we aren't *getting* to that point. Maybe it's already been with us for a long time.

Answering the big questions

One of my clients told me a story of when he was a little boy. He went to his dad and asked him, "Why are we here on Earth?" His dad, in his easy chair and watching the ball game, said, "Don't bother me, boy." So he went in the kitchen and asked his mom, "Why are we here?" His mom said, "Don't question God, honey."

He never *did* get an answer.

Maybe for you, these questions have been around for a long time. Maybe you've felt like your life's journey has been derailed by something outside of your control, or maybe you've derailed it with your own unique brand of sabotage. We've all been there, right?

What I often hear from really smart women is, "I feel successful on the inside, but it isn't reflected on the outside." Or sometimes I hear just the opposite: "I look successful on the outside, but I'm a mess on the inside." I even had someone tell me, "I feel successful, but it also feels kind of mediocre. I'm accomplished, so now what? Do I have the right to question my life when I'm this successful? Or should I just be grateful? Is it wrong to feel mediocre?"

Let me ask you this: No matter who you are, or where you are, do you have a sense that you should be doing greater things? Then it's time to slice through mediocrity!

One of the most common struggles I hear is about being stuck. "I'm so fed up being stuck in this place, and don't know how to get out of it." If this is you, don't worry, we're going to talk more about

that. Being stuck is a huge topic. It's one of the worst things that can happen to a human being: being stuck and feeling like you don't know how to get out of it.

I've dealt with this issue myself. With all of my successes . . . with all of my awards . . . with all of the acclamations I received . . . I've *still* felt stuck at times! But I'm here to tell you that we can get *unstuck*! In fact, if you're feeling stuck right now, you can visit www.RemyChausse.com and grab *five free videos* called "How to Get Unstuck."

So, do you get the feeling that something is missing, but can't quite pinpoint it? Do you feel kind of lost? Do you have a pull or a longing for "what's the purpose of my life?" And now, are you ready to move forward?

If so, you're ready to discover who you were created to be. You're ready to break through ordinary and fulfill your life's legacy. You're ready to move past all the question marks in life and find your exclamation points! And I'm here to help you do all of that. We are on the same team!

My Promise

So here's my promise. I'm going to lay out some ways to get started right away in finding your passionate life so you can *take back* those exclamation points, get out of the ordinary, and break through to the life you're meant to live!

We're going to look at some ways to get a jump start on your transformation, and I'm giving about 30% of my full program here. The other 70% is in the home study course, *Unleash The Vision Within*, which is available if you're aching to close the gap from where you are to where you want to be. I'll share more about that before the end. But right now we're looking at the basics, and this will be plenty to get us started!

As we go, we'll cover the five steps to finding your passionate life, and under each one, I'll give the definition of that topic to show where I'm coming from. I'll give an exercise. And then I'll leave an easy tip for getting started. And then I'll give some other resources as we go, on where you can get more information. So, before we really get started, you're going to need to grab a notebook. Nothing big, mind you! Just a place to write down your responses to each exercise as we go through them.

So let's tsszuj up our sleeves and get rolling! We're going to start with the number one thing that turned up in my research on why someone isn't reaching the level of success they want . . .

Overcoming Invalidation

“Those who know the least, know it the loudest” Chuck Goetschel

Warning! We’re entering controversial territory and this may be hard to handle. I’m going to ask you to recognize those people and situations in your life that are causing you to move farther and farther away from your soul. Maybe this won’t relate to you; maybe the people in your life are supportive and encouraging. But you may know someone who’s going through invalidation right now, and you may be able to save their life. So, as you go through this uncomfortable section, keep an open mind (and an open eye to others in your life.)

Okay, so what exactly IS invalidation?

Everyone experiences invalidation sometimes. It’s the thing that creeps into your life and steals your exclamation points. Invalidation happens when someone “takes you down a notch” by branding you unreasonable, illogical, or wrong. They can do this by ignoring your needs, refusing to believe you, pretending you don’t exist, or by simply telling you, either outright or through their actions, that *you don’t matter*. The result? The wind goes out of your sails. You feel discredited, crippled, even totally nullified.

There’s really no way to talk about this without making people uncomfortable because, when you get right down to it, invalidation is uncomfortable. It takes you, in all your strength and glory and greatness, and cuts you off at the knees.

I just want you to know this is the single hottest topic I have, so if you’ve ever gone through this, you aren’t alone.

The funny thing is, many people don’t even realize they’re being invalidated or discounted. Our world tends to want us to be accepting of others, to give others the benefit of the doubt, and that can throw us into some gray area. We hear their invalidating comment, but instead of being outraged or offended, we say, “Oh, he didn’t really mean it that way. I’m taking it too personally.”

But wait a minute! We *should* take it personally! We should never allow anyone to make us feel inferior!

May I just say . . . giving others the benefit of the doubt has been the single biggest place I’ve tripped for most of my life. Because, while it’s necessary in some instances, it can also completely *shroud* invalidation. So here’s a good tip . . .

Insight #8: Before you give somebody the benefit of the doubt, take a moment to make sure there’s no hidden agenda you may be missing.

Look at the root word in the phrase, “benefit of the doubt.” The word I’m looking at is doubt. If you have a doubt, that’s a red flag! Pull out the flashlight and shine it on that doubt!

You know you’re being invalidated by how you feel. If you feel like you aren’t real, like you don’t exist, like you don’t matter . . . if you feel *less than* . . . you are under invalidation. Period. This is not a gray area!

Insight #9: The question we need to ask if we think we may be under invalidation is, “How do I feel?”

Being invalidated can happen anywhere . . . by anyone . . . at any time.

Is it Invalidation? Or Something Else?

There are simply dozens of stories I could tell you about invalidation. Some of them are incredibly obvious to everyone, but others are intensely personal and maybe not as obvious because we're too close to the situation.

One of my friends is the mother of a "tween." You know, that *12 going on 18* kind of daughter. And, like many tweens, her daughter was often, shall we say, *difficult*. She was going through the typical tween rebellion, refusing to listen, arguing with her mother about everything, and defying long standing house rules.

Whenever my friend would call her on her bad behavior, her daughter would say, "Chill, Mom! It's not that big a deal! You're getting yourself all worked up over nothing!" And my friend actually allowed her daughter's words to sink in and start burrowing deep into her self consciousness. My friend worried that maybe she *was* making too big a deal over nothing.

She allowed that thinking process to undermine her own beliefs and values about being a parent. But, was it invalidation?

So we talked about her values and how she handled similar situations in other settings, with other people. And she realized that her concerns were unfounded. Anywhere else, she was confident in her decisions and didn't really question them. She didn't agonize over details or stress about minor issues.

But when it concerned her daughter, she felt uncertain. Growing up, her own mother had constantly undermined her self esteem and my friend worried that she was doing the same to her own daughter. She came to realize, however, that it was exactly *because* of her upbringing that she was able to be certain of her values. She could feel proud that she was raising a daughter who was self confident and unwilling to let others undermine her, even if it meant that my friend had to endure a little teenage rebellion as a result!

Were her daughter's comments invalidating? If my friend felt belittled then, yes. But that wasn't the case. Sometimes it's helpful not to micromanage communication, but instead look for the lesson or opportunity within it.

Insight #10: Opportunities to crystallize our own values are always around us, if we know how to look for them.

An "All Too Common" Story of Invalidation

Let me tell you another story. Andrea recently began to realize that she was being invalidated by her long time boyfriend . . . and it had been happening for quite some time.

Andrea is a teacher and frequently stayed after school to grade papers and prepare for the next day. This process helped her to work through all of the things that needed to be done for her students, and also gave her a way to ease out of the hectic school day and into a more relaxing and enjoyable evening. And, on Fridays, she'd join a few of her colleagues for a drink at happy hour before going home.

Whenever her after school grading sessions ran late, her boyfriend would complain that she wasn't showing him enough attention . . . and she "must be" wasting a lot of time at school during the day because she couldn't get her work done during her official hours.

She found herself trying to explain to him how complex and involved her job was, and she began to question herself. Did she *really* need to stay after school to get work done? Did she *really* need to spend time with friends after work? Was she *really* not spending enough time with her boyfriend?

Now, Andrea had not had the best examples of relationships, so she gave her boyfriend the benefit of the doubt. She really began to think that *she* was the one causing the problems in the relationship, and that he was only trying to remind her of what a good relationship was about.

She began leaving school right after the students left, and taking work home with her instead. She found the transition difficult. Taking the work home with her meant bringing the stress of her job into her home life. Not only that, but she gave up her weekly happy hour time with her friends, a ritual that had helped her decompress a little each week, and nurture her relationships outside of her home life.

But her efforts didn't make things better. Instead, her boyfriend began to accuse her of trying to cover up an affair, despite the fact that she was now home with him almost all the time that she wasn't at school.

It made her anxious. Her friends could see the strain she was under. They reminded her of what a good teacher – and person – she was. As she began to open up to them, her friends were supportive and encouraged her to be true to herself.

She focused on her feelings and realized her friends were right, but the process was difficult. She had lost sight of her values as a result of his invalidation and was doubting herself. However, as she began to focus again on her own values, she got strong enough to walk away from the relationship.

Focus on the Positive

If *any* conversation makes you feel inferior, you are under invalidation. Now, we get to choose how we feel; no one else is responsible for how we feel. I'm not talking about that. I'm only talking about how to recognize invalidation, so that we don't become ruled by it. The thing to know is that invalidation is never ideal, and someone is trying to control you. So we can empower ourselves by walking away from experiences that are invalidating. No conversation necessary. Just. Walk. Away.

How did my friend decide to handle her tween? She didn't confront her daughter or try to convince her otherwise. What would be the point? It was her daughter's way of asserting *her* own mind. Instead, every time her daughter accused her of being too anxious, or too controlling, or too . . . well, *anything* . . . my friend simply smiled. She knew, because she knew her own values, that her decisions were right. It didn't take long for her daughter to realize that she wasn't going to win any arguments with that line anymore! And they were both able to keep a more positive attitude.

And in the second story, the invalidation was clear. When you give someone the benefit of the doubt (yet you still doubt yourself), then the perfect course of action is to check in with your own values and reassess the situation. If it's appropriate to walk away, then do so without even looking back. I once had a manager tell me, "If you're gonna lose, lose fast!" So smile and move on, knowing your values are strong and intact.

Now, whether you're regrouping from a teenage battle, or transitioning out of a relationship with Mr. Wonderful, there still may be some residual negative charge. So I'm going to give you one of my favorite ways to discharge the emotional charge that can come from invalidation. (Even more tips, like effectively using the "stop sign hand" technique, are in my home study program at www.UnleashTheVisionWithin.com)

Here's my favorite tip for now . . .

Insight #11: When somebody invalidates you by ignoring your needs, refusing to believe you, pretending you don't exist, or by telling you that you don't matter: find something *positive* about that situation.

Now this may seem over simplified.

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