

My Top 5...and how to use them to get unstuck

#1. “I don't know, but ...you want to find out?”

The people I work with don't want to be told what to do, and don't *really* want advice or permission from me. What they want is *movement*. Actually, what they want is what comes AFTER movement—new or different perspectives, insights and inspired ideas, confidence, and the sure-footedness that only experience on the open road can bring.

Of course there is fear and doubt and worry—that's natural, and I remind my clients of this. But you know what is at the crux of it? *Anticipation* of what happens next. That's what causes us to stop in our tracks and go to our heads—far, far away from the desire in our hearts urging us along.

Here's what helps:

- **Plug back into your spirit of adventure**—your wild child who was born for the open road. Create a playlist that was made with her in mind, and transports you to a time in your life when you felt most free, spirited, and unencumbered (for what it's worth, Steppenwolf *Born to be Wild* is always a hot pick of mine, as is *We've Got The Beat* by the Go-Go's and *The Devil Went Down To Georgia* by The Charlie Daniel's Band). Whatever it is, cue that music up, roll the windows down and take the long way home. Remember who you are.
- **Think of one symbolic action** that would put you on the road to finding out what comes next—maybe it's buying a domain name, maybe it's revising your resume, or maybe it's registering for a half marathon. You know what it is. If you don't, think of something that scares the shit out of you and move toward it in your mind's eye. Call or text your most bold and crazy badass friend (yea, THAT one), and tell her you're going to do something totally WILD today and that you need her to hold you accountable by asking you about it tomorrow. Lay it down (whomp, there it is!) and enlist a witness so you're not alone. Courage magnifies when you have an audience.

#2. “We're all just making this shit up.”

So true, but how quickly we forget when scrolling through the InstaFace feeds and comparing ourselves to others, right? I get it. I fall for it, too. In those moments when we're feeling most vulnerable and wanting something that feels so out of our reach or overwhelming, it's seductive to tell that familiar story: *Everybody else has it all figured out...what's my problem!?* You don't have a problem, my friend, you have a feeling—and that feeling is fear, which is natural and to be expected (you noticing a pattern already?).

Here's what helps:

- **Brainstorm yourself outta that box you're thinking in.** Whatever your age, create THAT many possibilities of what you could do to take action. Write at the top: What If... with a bold sharpie marker and number it—one for each year of your life. Start with batshit crazy stuff that makes you laugh and feels like it has absolutely nothing to do with anything. The idea here is to not take yourself so seriously—inspiration doesn't like to squeeze into cracks, so give it lots of room to roam and see where it takes you.
- **Adopt a spirit of play and color outside the lines.** No seriously, think kindergarten art class. Find a wall in your life and take everything off of it—make it your blank canvas. Go hog wild and paint blackboard paint so you can draw right on the wall, or get one of those big butcher paper rolls of paper and tape it up near the ceiling and let it drop down. Grab a handful of markers (bonus points for scented ones!) and start jotting shit down that you've got swirling around in your head—ideas, desires, opportunities, what breaks your heart, unmet needs you see in our world, crazy schemes you haven't given voice to, or things that keep finding you that are compelling. Capture it all and let it be unfinished, like you. Live with it, let it speak to you, and respond back to it with your marker. Imagine you are co-creating with some unseen force, and go where it takes you.

#3. “It's just us chickens in here.”

There are those moments when my clients lean in, look over their shoulders to make sure no one is listening, and then proceed to tell me what's really in their heart of hearts. I love those moments, I do, because they feel intimate—like I get to witness something new being uttered into the light of day for the first time.

That's when I'll often use this phrase, to underscore the sacredness of this moment—almost like it's a confession (side note: I'm not Christian, but I've worked with enough of them to realize how much shit can get kicked up when desire comes riding into town.)

Here's what helps:

- **Connect your desire with service.** Sometimes the best place to begin is by asking yourself what breaks your heart, and then see how that informs your desire to make a change or go after some new idea your conjuring. If it's more money you want, ask yourself what you would *do* with that additional money. If it's more time, freedom, responsibility, visibility, or opportunity...listen to what's in your heart of hearts. From where I sit, our deepest desires are often connected to a greater good that will benefit us all.
- **Write a short story.** No seriously—write a story in the third person to crack open this egg of desire and get a closer look at this person you are becoming. Unfurl and unfold yourself so you can see what right there—tightly rolled up. Begin quite simply with: *There once was a woman who...* and watch where your pen leads you. Every time you get stuck or lose steam, get more curious—and *THEN* what happened? Write yourself into being, and your will move yourself into doing.

#4. “You're not crazy...and you're not alone.”

Crazy and alone are two of the most frequent words my clients use to describe themselves—and they are generally used in the same sentence, resulting in a one-two punch of vulnerability. *Crazy* is the preferred weapon fear uses to eradicate any desire or dream that doesn't fit within conventional wisdom or rational thought, and feeling *alone* is a natural consequence of that because (say it with me...) *"Everyone else doesn't seem to have a problem...why can't you be like everyone else?"*

But the thing is, I don't work with *Everyone Else*, I work with people like you who are hungry to step outside the box, color outside the lines, and move beyond the way things are.

Here's what helps:

- **Build an alter to your soul.** You don't need religion for this one, but you do need an intention to hold space for something that matters to you. This is a way to bring reverence and ritual to something that might seem heretical. Grab a small table, a sun-lit corner, or even the back of your closet door and clear it off. Gather symbols, artifacts, place holders—even colored stickie notes with words written on them—and assemble them on or near your alter. For the next two weeks, continue to add to it and use this as your focal point for prayer, meditation or holding counsel with your dream to have it feel more real and tangible. Feed your alter, and you will ignite your soul to take inspired action.
- **Shop for inspiration through admiration.** I am constantly asking my clients who they admire, because I hold the belief that who you *admire* is who you *are*. Like attracts like. So start looking around for examples of who has what you'd like, even if it has you feel like you're being envious—jealously is just a form of longing in disguise. Make a list of those people that are doing what you aim to do, possess qualities you wish to embody more, and are living the life you are hungry to live. Take notes, get specific, and see if you can gather these people up energetically as sort of an entourage for your soul.

#5. “Gracefulness is a tall order in transition.”

I'm really loud in times of transition—and I do this for my living. I throw epic fits, I swear a lot, I moan and kvetch, and I talk to myself...constantly. Yea, I'm a barrel of monkeys in transition, not Sophia Loren. I forget to eat and shower. I let the dishes and the laundry pile up. It suits me, and you know why?

Change is messy work, so I find it oddly soothing if my outer surroundings match my inner landscape—at least for a while. Making space means letting go—of expectations, right/wrong, control, other's opinions/reactions, and what is comfortable and familiar.

I don't know about you, but I don't do that without making a fair amount of noise. Same goes for my clients. Think of a woman having a baby. Think of when a loved one dies. Think of moving into a new apartment or job. Messy, not graceful or elegant.

Here's what helps:

- **Write yourself a permission slip.** Give yourself a Get Out Of Jail Free card to release yourself from yesterday's standards. Stand firmly by your brave self, and speak on behalf of her as an ally—what do you need to let go of, move beyond or allow yourself during this messy stretch of road? Write that shit down, my friend, seal it with a kiss, and put it somewhere sacred like an altar or inside your pillow case. Be your own fierce wing woman to help land your F-18 fighter jet safely on that airplane carrier floating in the middle of your ocean.
- **Create some new operating instructions.** Your old rules of engagement with regard to self-care, compassion and expectations are most likely going to take a beating or come up woefully short in times of transition, so it's best to lay down some new rules and guidelines since the game has changed. Let it be known: there's a new sheriff in town. In my own life, I call this "Lael Code" and it has stuff on it like "make messy art", "get dirty" and "take the roof off" (I have a Jeep, but you get what I mean). Put another way, this might be your measures of success—what you will celebrate—so decide this in advance and nail it to your tree.