



Living with Purpose

On my continued quest to live wholeheartedly this month, I'm tackling yet another of Berne Brown's guideposts for living. Never an easy task, but always worth the effort. Here are my musings....

Guidepost for Wholehearted Living #9: Cultivating Meaningful Work: Letting go of self-doubt and “supposed to”

If you don't engage in meaningful work, you will feel like part of your soul is getting choked off.

You will continually have that nagging feeling of discontent even when on paper your life looks perfect. How do I know this? Because I experienced it for myself. I had a career in school psychology that had been successful and rewarding at one point in time, but then it simply wasn't anymore. I was in a position that didn't fully tap into my gifts and strengths and it felt stagnant. I needed something different because I was transforming into a different person.

Enter in yoga and I knew that I had found something that was meaningful to me. I loved how it combined physical, mental, and spiritual growth all in one practice. This became important to me because I felt strongly that if I'm going to age, I'm damn well going to do it with finesse and develop into a better person! Even better that I get to share that inspiration and growth with other people when I teach. I've also enjoyed transitioning into wellness coaching because it is a perfect marriage of my psychology background and passion for health. I love helping people transform into the best version of themselves!

What it Means to Pursue Meaningful Work

Recognize that what is meaningful work to you can shift over the course of a lifetime.

Teaching yoga still allowed me to help others; the format and process of my helping simply shifted.

Move past the traditional concept of “work”.

So many people think of work as a negative term; something to be endured, to “get through” in order to play. Well I don't think it has to be that way. At times our play can become our work and work our play.

Doing meaningful work doesn't necessarily have to involve money.

Meaningful work can be what you do for your family, friends, volunteering, or engaging in producing something of value to yourself. It doesn't always have to come attached to a paycheck.

Turn up the volume on self-talk that validates you have something important to share with the world. Turn down the volume of “voices” in your head (yours or those of someone else) that lead to self-doubt and getting submerged under “supposed to’s”

For me this involved tuning out messages I received from others that yoga wasn't a “real” job, tuning out messages from myself that I couldn't possibly run my own business without a business background, and tuning into affirmations on my own worth and valuing how I can inspire others.

So how we do go about this you may ask?

Steps to Pursuing Meaningful Work

Give yourself permission to pursue meaningful work even if it means going outside your original “plan”, degree/training, or going against the grain of what others expect of you

This really is the most important step of all. Because unless you give yourself permission and fully commit, you will let everything else come between you and meaningful work.

Be willing to be a beginner and experience failure.

Don't expect perfection, especially if pursuing meaningful work means getting out of your comfort zone and branching out into something new. Failures are simple opportunities to learn. They don't mean you made the wrong choice.

Reflect on the following questions.

What types of activities make me feel alive AND like I'm contributing to the world at large?

What types of “work” would I do even if I didn't get paid?

What types of “work” or activities can I get into so deeply that time passes without me even realizing it?

Answering the questions above will give you great insight into what type of “work” is meaningful and beneficial to you.

I know I'm pursuing meaningful work in teaching yoga when I would teach even if I suddenly became independently wealthy. I would do it simply for the pure joy I derive from teaching.

Commit to taking a first step.

You don't have to know how everything is going to play out, but you do need to take action. Do you need to sign up for a class? Do you need to discuss your decision with a family member? Start looking for a new job? Or it could be as simple as blocking out time on your schedule to pursue a meaningful activity. But without commitment in some form, it's too easy to let status quo rule.

I think you will find that by pursuing meaningful work, your life, and those of other people you touch through it, will be enriched. You will become a more positive, powerful force in the world. You will experience more satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness – and who doesn't want that?

I feel blessed that Wellfinity allows me the opportunity to cultivate meaningful work. There's little I enjoy more than helping you become healthier, more empowered, and vibrant versions of yourselves! Contact me if you're ready to take that step.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a slightly larger "S" at the beginning.

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!