

SHERRY MILLS

PERSPECTIVE



7 SIMPLE SHIFTS *for*
PERSONAL FREEDOM

Sherry's work has been featured by USA Today, SCOPE Basel, Communication Arts, and NYC TV. Her style attracted modeling roles with Swiss Air, MAC, and Vanity Fair, and her collectors have come out of MTV, The Met, HBO, and The New York Times.

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INTRODUCTION



7 Simple Shifts for Personal Freedom

“My true self is free. It cannot be contained.”

-Marcus Aurelius

Hi, I’m Sherry.

You may have heard or even subscribe (as I do) to the expression, “Health is everything”.

I believe that “getting to okay” is the prerequisite to building a beautiful life, and from my own experience, I understand that getting there can be a much harder lift than many realize or even acknowledge. By ‘life’ I mean the one where gratitude rules my heart, and my mind is completely unshackled. Where the tears that flow are from joy and acceptance. Where manifestation of desired outcomes is where I get to finally play.

What I’m referring to is Freedom. You and me, we were always Free. We just find ourselves in a plane of existence that has a bad reputation for obstructing that freedom. So, it is up to us to reclaim it for ourselves. Yet it seems to me there’s only the facade of freedom to chip shards off of, or the mirage of freedom to chase, when one is

not well. When I look around me, I question if this chipping and chasing is not what most of us are doing.

Why? I think Thucydides expressed it well when he said, “The secret to happiness is freedom.... And the secret to freedom is courage.” It takes courage to be free. This book is for the courageous freedom seekers like me. My mental health journey, or what I call my “path to okay”, began at birth and got serious at age seventeen. Because it had to. It has since brought me into contact and practice with Acupuncture, Nonviolent Communication, Shamanism, Yoga, Tai Chi, Astrology, Iridology, Kinesiology, Herbology, Homeopathy, Network Chiropractic, Metaphysics, Tarot, Personal Dynamics, Reiki, Nonduality, Holographic Memory Resolution, Dance, Meditation, and Cherokee Medicine.

I have been blessed by the aid and wisdom of so many practitioners and shamans on this path. What they’ve consistently reminded me, by sheer example, is that their gifts supported incredible healing in my life simply (and only) because of their willingness to share them.

I can honestly say that I’ve never felt better. I’m in a healthy marriage, I’m building what I’m passionate about, and I have a strong and reliable practice for maintaining my balance in mind and body. What I’m saying is, I finally understand life beyond okay. It doesn’t matter to me if that doesn’t sound like much of an accomplishment to the world, but it took a lot for me to get here. I am learning to love myself for having had the will to do the work necessary to arrive here, and to continually return here, every time I fall away. Finding and using these tools I share in this book didn’t really feel like an option for me, so much as a necessity. I know I’m not alone in having struggled with my mind, my power, and my relationships. And I know I’m also not alone in having had the courage to source my own freedom in spite of them.

So consider this mini book of tools to achieving personal freedom my attempt at overpowering my introverted nature and instead wearing my truth publicly on my sleeve. Because I owe it to all those who have helped me deepen my wellbeing, to pay it forward. This book consists of “getting to okay” springboards, simple perspective shifting tools that I hope might help you touch down inside your own personal version of freedom as a consistently felt experience.

As with everything meaningful that is lasting, it is lasting only because we’re in practice with it. And so, I encourage you to revisit these tools, try out the calls-to-action, take notice of what clicks in for you differently in a moment or feels like a new response to life, and develop a fun rinse-and-repeat approach to employing these tools in your daily life.

Without further ado, let’s dive into one of my all-time personal favorites—finding perfection in imperfection! If an obsession with perfection is an obsession with control, and control is at odds with freedom, I’d like to think that Marcus Aurelius would therefore agree that a healthy appreciation of imperfection can serve as a steppingstone into our true selves.

Thank you for taking this journey with me!

Now, let’s go!



FIND BEAUTY IN THE UNLIKELY PLACE



See Your Way Free

*“It’s not what you look at that matters...
It’s what you see.”
-Henry David Thoreau*

The first muscle I built on my path to personal freedom was the ability to drop into the beauty of life as it existed around me, exactly as it was.

The first step here is to get newly present with what is *outside of you*. Because in a very real sense, how you see *really is everything*. I like to say that there are two ways to cry over spilled milk. One way is for how fantastic it looks.

You may have heard it said that gratitude is a major key to manifesting the life you desire. Gratitude puts us in an open-hearted and receptive state and therefore quickens the development of more ‘blissy stuff’ because like attracts like. And in the end, it is our state of energy that largely determines the quality of our life and its manifestations.

So, if we are either continually imprisoned or continually freed by the perspective we’re holding... the ability to see what’s right in front of us with eyes of appreciation is a terrific

tool for instantly reclaiming gratitude as our energetic state and manifesting the good that flows from there.

You've probably experienced that sweet mental freedom that comes from putting down the label and just letting something—or someone—be exactly what they are.

For me, a great tool for releasing from inner conflict has been a way of outward seeing that takes in the landscape with a label-less approach. In this way, abstraction becomes the healing tool.

This is all about appreciating form for form's sake. So when a curb is seen as an exquisite abstract expressionist painting of curves, textures, and color play, instead of just some area of dirt, debris, and dog piss, I have succeeded.

Going label-less allows for more eye candy moments. It's a means to melt into momentary freedom.

I'm always amazed by how the simplest shift of focus can be so liberating. How something as basic as a piece of garbage on the sidewalk can hit me like a museum masterpiece.

The practice of appreciating the mess, the details, the happenstance, exactly as they are also allows me to find beauty in the areas where I thought it not to be throughout my everyday life, and inside my relationships, too.

I have found that with enough experiences seeing the 'everywhere art show', there's no going back to a time when surrounding riches are scarcely noticed.

With all of life's challenges, there's a deepened inner security that comes simply by developing this ability to see beauty in the unlikely place. And that's something that no one can take away from you. So may your vision be aglow today, with the wonderment of the once mundane.

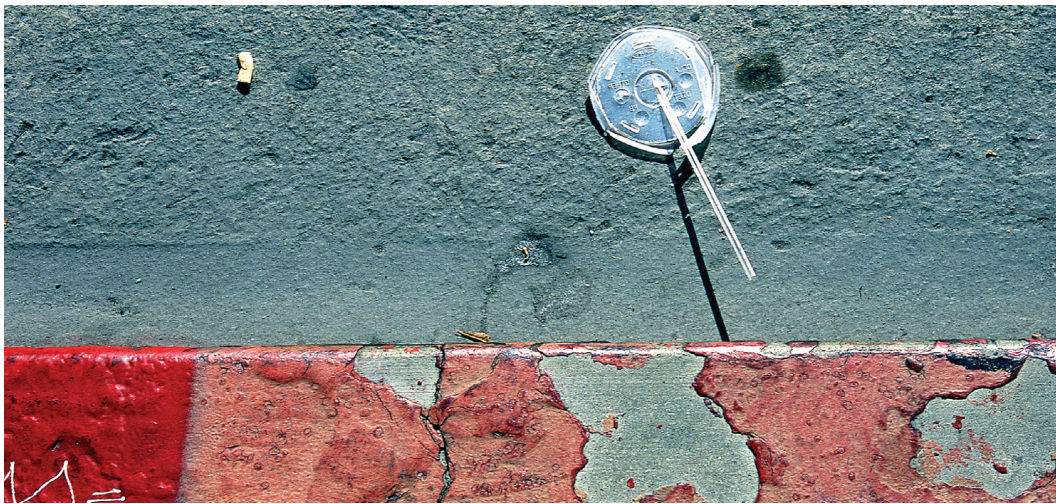
Beauty... may be closer than you think!



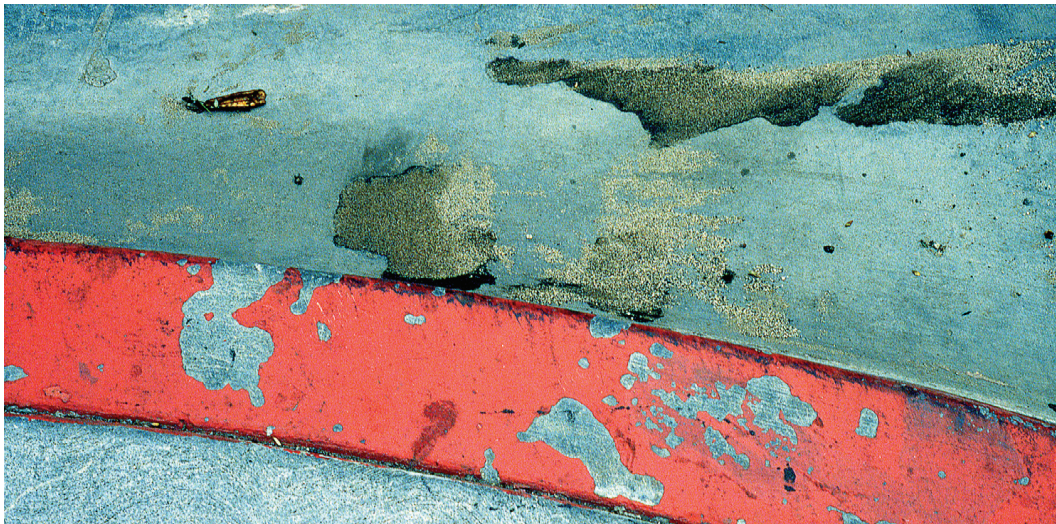
Sidewalk cellar doors, Murray Hill, Manhattan



"Milkshake" in San Diego, from my CLOSER Collection



"LA Soda" - CLOSER Collection



"California Dream" - Curb in San Diego - CLOSER Collection



"1 Centre Street" - Side of a dumpster in Downtown Manhattan - CLOSER Collection



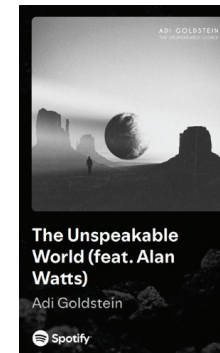
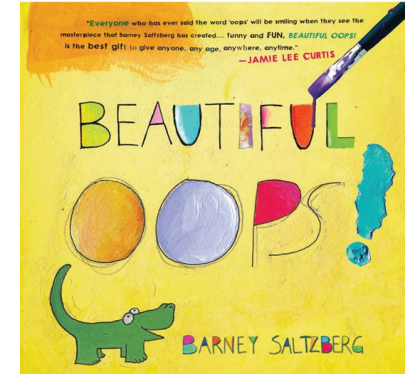
"Green and Cherry" - Dried paint found around a mailbox leg in Williamsburg, Brooklyn - CLOSER Collection

Call To Action:

Capture a picture today of something you never would have considered 'art' before.

Recommendations:

I discovered an incredible children's book that truly captures the "see your way free" principle. I got it for my niece's second birthday and I plan to get it for countless more children (and, well, adults, too). It's called *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg.



A powerful music piece that found me one day, that deepens the see your way free principle every time I hear it, is Adi Goldstein's "The Unspeakable World", featuring the words of Alan Watts. Give it a listen.



"Brooklyn Lollipop" – Lying on the ground at a subway exit in Fort Greene, Brooklyn - CLOSER Collection



Photo Credit: John Fletcher

ROCK STAR YOUR PAIN



Feel Your Way Free

“You can own your pain and it can be a good part of you.”

-Lady Gaga

Sometimes the pain you feel is great. And no matter how well you’ve developed the ability to find beauty in the unlikely place, there are times when there seems to be no beauty in sight. Or rather, you don’t even care if there is.

You’re not after a silver lining in these moments. You’re angry, enraged, hurt, or depressed; you have been through something significant for which the emotional grip is so strong that you need something more than the eyes to see something beautifully.

For these harder “perspective shifting” jobs of life, there’s Feeling your way free.

In times like these, I have found it critical to reframe my pain by memorializing the experience I’m going through. I’ve needed to *create* something that will allow me to own my experience as an art form all its own.

You've probably heard the adage, "The only way to it, is through it". Well, I have found a way that honors the going 'through it' but gets you to 'it' faster. It's about becoming a rock star with your pain. And you do that by felt expression.

We're not taught to trust that pain itself is our most precious guiding light out of the dark. We're taught to deny its existence and get sick as a consequence.

We receive lots of education about things of the physical realm, such as simple first aid, but we are severely ill equipped to handle the breakages created by death, divorce, and other emotional losses.

I discovered that the way through some of the hardest pains in my life is to lie down inside of them in full surrender, with a pen, a box of Kleenex, and an empowering playlist. The poetess wants control, and I give it to her. Because she can find the art inside of anything.

Once that art is found, I am able to encapsulate that experience as something meaningful. The pain is given a chance to transform into something worthwhile; I become empowered by having expressed through it, and only then can I really release it.

I'll share with you a painful experience from my own life in which I employed "feel your way free" to great result.

I went through a blindsiding crash of a ten-year relationship with a partner. My heart was well shattered, and so I let my wounded muse take over, and I created the beginnings of "The Betrayal Project". (Stay tuned for this project's release in the future.)

For now, I'd like to share one tool from that series that helped me through one of the many gripping and unavoidable actions of that separation process, which was packing up his stuff from our apartment for his retrieval.



Still from my "Formative Years" box



Still from "The Sticky Situation" box



Me 'inside' "The Dad Box" – True Confessions Collection

Basically, I did a photo shoot of all his stuff as I packed it. I knew the only way I was going to survive alone in that apartment for any period of time was to remove the objects and art pieces that we'd treasured together in our small apartment for a decade. Not only artworks, but the gifts I'd given him that started to weep with their own ironic pain, like the "Best Lover" magnet. Then there was the bowl that always contained the onions he'd cook with, or our pillowcases... I needed to reclaim the space, however briefly, in order to breathe and manifest new life from within its small confines.

I am such a sentimentalist, so maybe you can imagine that this process was harder for me than maybe it'd have been for some. As an artist and collector, objects transport me quickly into stories and experiences. And in this particular experience, I needed the things around me to transport me into self-love as best they could, not the crippling visions of betrayal that were only activated by our shared object past.

And so, this act of elevating the objects of my past and my ex—each of them photographed on white like they were being placed on the walls of a gallery, whether his prized artworks or even his belts and shampoo—satisfied the documentarian inside me. By turning it all into an 'art collection', I was able to wrap it all up and say goodbye. I got to "own" my past as art, which gave me the license to move forward.

So was I feeling my way free inside this process? Well let's just say that if The Sentient Awards existed, I'd have been at the podium with a trophy. My emotions were varied and at full inner volume during this photo shoot. I felt my way through the pain, object by object, as they worked their healing magic on me.



Call To Action:

Sometimes just capturing a picture of an object that brings up a feeling of loss or pain can be a way to memorialize (and thereby create art from) the experience. It can also be an aid to releasing things from your physical space that no longer serve you emotionally. I encourage you to try this ‘capture and release’ with just one item and see what happens.

Recommendations:

During this same time of my recovery, I also created a video. It’s about my philosophy on Perspective and the power it holds to liberate us inside of any life situation. I used my art as visual narrative.

As a homemade video made in an emotionally raw moment in time, it’s probably a little jarring. But it’s everything I was feeling, and I was newly empowered on the other side of its creation. So I share it with you in the hopes it might inspire some creative use of the energies felt during a hard moment in your life, so that you might rise and gain new levels of personal freedom through their expression.



Excerpt: “We have something critical in common: our perspective is ALL we have. We are either imprisoned by it, or we are freed by it, continually. Our friend dies in a car crash, our husband runs off with the secretary, we can’t afford groceries until Friday, our beloved parent gets Parkinson’s disease, and every belief we had about love gets put into the shredder one morning, and we watch ourselves limping around in some kind of shell shock with mental shrapnel piercing our every part. Life breaks us down, but only our perspective has the power to sew us back up...”



Photo Credits: John Fletcher

True Confessions

I also discovered during this time that creating costumes and layering myself with symbols of my harder past experiences offered a way of “owning” those experiences as art—to feel fueled, rather than deflated, by them. At this link, you’ll find my [“True Confessions”](#) project for your private view. I hope it inspires newfound ownership of your own experiences.

*“Freedom lies in
being bold.”*

*-Robert
Frost*



WHAT DOESN'T 'GO', JUST MIGHT



Arrange Your Way Free

*“What you’re wearing should definitely not be ‘working’,
but somehow it totally is.”*

-People who meet me on the street

Ok, so you didn't download this ebook for a lesson in conformity! I'm here to say Yes, You Can... wear a charreuse skirt as a scarf if you want to. My unconventional style has gotten some attention throughout my life. Whenever I'm asked how I get dressed, I reply with, "I love collage and I love color, so I just treat my body as though it were the canvas."

'Good art' isn't born of playing it safe. The same is true of fashion. The trick is to not think clothing or body at all, but purely shapes and patterns as though you were crafting an abstract painting. Some of the best artworks contain unruly juxtapositions of arguably clashing hues and textures. But seen as a whole form, all of those *wrongs* make a *right*.

So does it really have to be all black blazers and grey socks?

“ ‘Good art’
isn’t born of
playing it safe.
The same is true
of fashion.”
-Sherry Mills

Oftentimes, the curious strangers I meet, in reference to my outfit, will say, “But I could never pull that off and dress that way.” These statements usually come from people I just know would love nothing more than to have the courage to shake things up. The courage to feel more freedom in their self-expression. Not all cultures have severed ties with what I’d consider our natural instinct to let our bodies and our creative expressions live as one. But the one I grew up in, well, it seems prone to a staid and confining stylistic status quo.

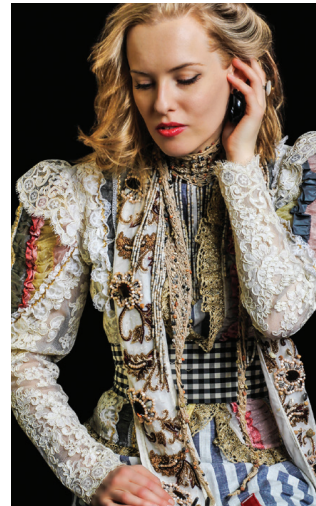


Photo Credits: Sydnie Michele

So I use getting dressed as a tool for stepping into my creative empowerment and forcing me out of the comfort zone of societal norms. The simple act of choosing wild socks can free up my ability to express myself more authentically on other levels. This is where fashion goes beyond the superficial; it opens up inner worlds. Then... there is also the styling of *space*.

You may be familiar with Feng Shui or the art of space clearing or have heard the expression, “You are your environment”. I am wildly passionate about space decoration and arrangement for the same reasons I dress the way I do.

Photo Credits: Sydnie Michele



Photo Credit: John Fletcher

HONOR THE SIGNS



Trust Your Way Free

“And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don’t believe in magic will never find it.”

-The Minpins, by Roald Dahl



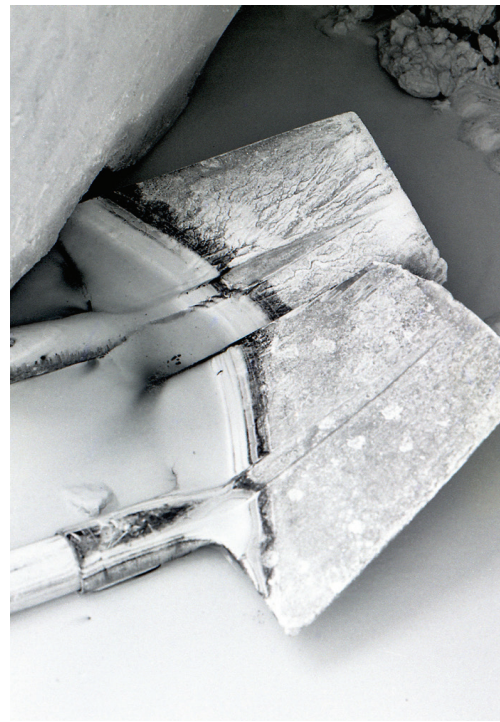
*“Mailbox 9” – Woodstock, NY
CLOSER Collection*

The Signs That Show Up

From the time I was very young, I’ve picked up on signs and messages that have felt like they’re being presented by someone or something that wants me to remember the source I’ve come from. To feel the magic, and perhaps, the inherent order of this mysterious existence. As well as to remember that in the very core of my being, I am deeply okay.



"Smile Wall" – CLOSER Collection



Spotted at the Carrara Marble Quarry in Tuscany



"Little Italy Glove" – CLOSER Collection

Is the random, really so random?

***Sometimes the signs are right there in front of me,
waiting to be seen, and waiting to be trusted.***



New tiling, NYC subway platform



Outside a supermarket in Belgrade, Serbia



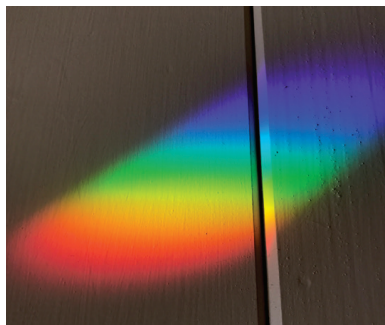
"Sono Con Te" – Apuan Alps in Tuscany

I've had particular numbers follow me around for decades. Of particular note, is the number thirty-three. The sometimes jaw-dropping profundity with which it shows up, where and in connection with whom, never ceases to amaze me. It's been like a security blanket or a comfort food from the divine. It provokes a calm smile and an inner "of course", reminding me that I'm part of something way more intelligently organized than my mind could ever grasp. It has me feel that everything is on path; that I am on path.

When thirty-three packs an even larger trust punch is when it shows up in extended form: as 333. Perhaps there's been no more significant an instance of its appearance than when I met my now husband, Johnny. I was taken over by not only my initial meeting of him, but the fact we ran into each other on the street in Manhattan the very next day. I was miles from my apartment. I looked him up online, found his Facebook page, and saw that he had 332 friends; if I pushed request, I'd have been his friend number 333. The friending gesture felt a bit premature at that moment, but I knew that I needed to see what I was there to see. Ten years later, we celebrate not only the deep connection we feel for each other in our marriage, but the fact we are true friends.

The Signs Don't Lie

I've also been flooded with meaningful run-ins with animals ever since losing my Dad—from the buck I locked eyes with on my night walk, to the eagle and owl that perched outside my window. I've had startlingly clear messages from deceased relatives and friends and have had the statement on a tea bag tag, the feather found on the ground, the song that played next on



my playlist, or the rainbow hitting a wall be all that I needed to see or hear in a moment to feel deeply connected with life.

The Signs We Seek Out

One of my most exhilarating experiences as a kid (apart from visiting the dollhouse miniature store) was greeting that row of toy vending machines outside the supermarket's sliding doors.

- What bubble would my quarter deliver me?
- What surprise object would be inside?
- What would that object mean to me?
- What would it be trying to tell me?



This form of quest for signs and messages is surely Tarot's relative. I have been floored time and time again by how reliably a drawn card can respond directly to a present need for supportive information.

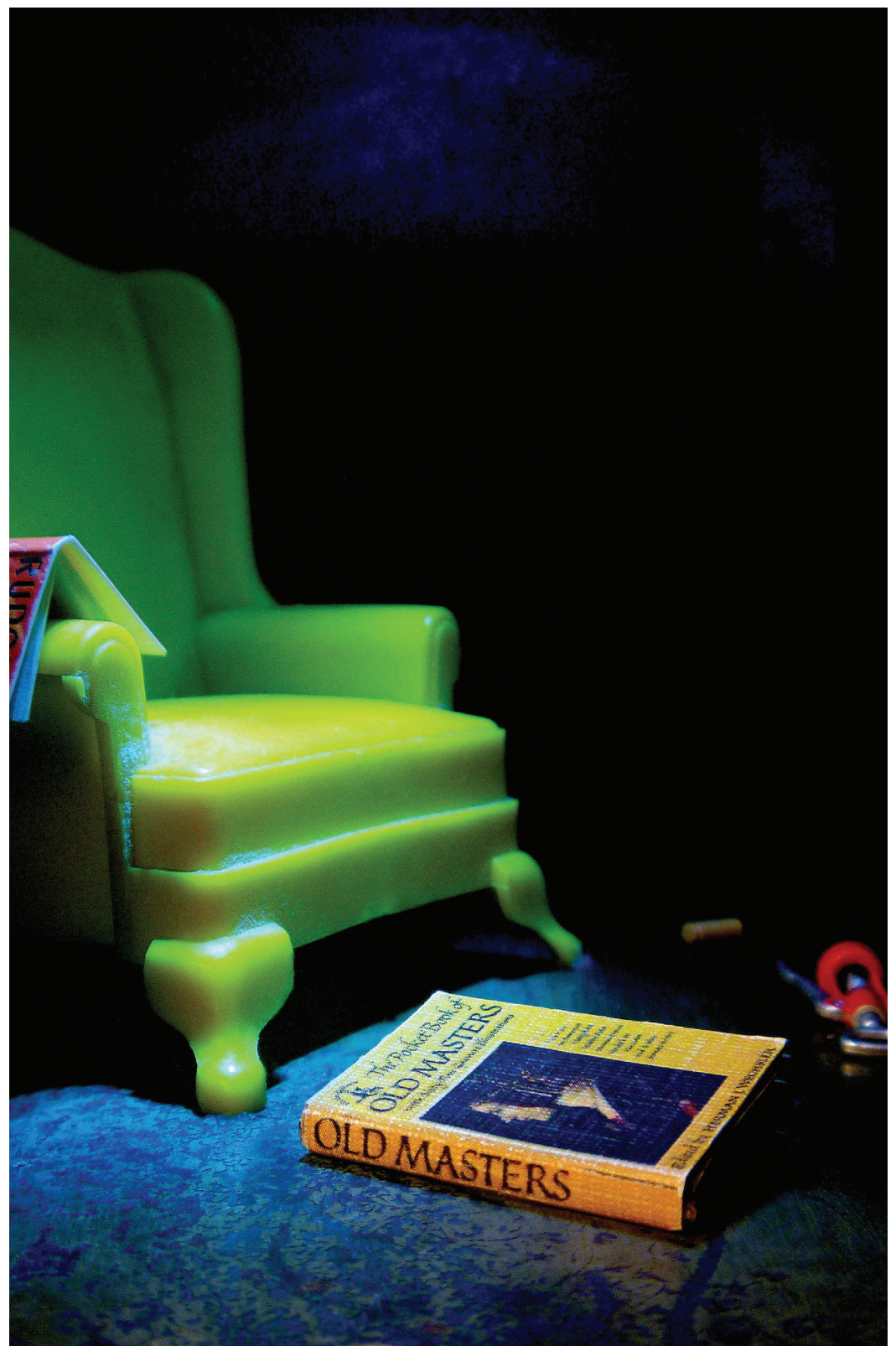
So whether it's a Tarot card, or a vending machine capsule, or some other medium with surprise at its core, I encourage you to have fun asking for signs – and receiving them!

The Signs We Don't See

When I fast forward to adulthood, I see how the assemblage work I was making with little objects toward the end of that aforementioned long-term relationship was eerily foreshadowing heartbreak. Meaning, signs were channeling through my own hands, words, my own creation. But I didn't see them for what they were until betrayal was revealed and the relationship went through a hard fall-apart.

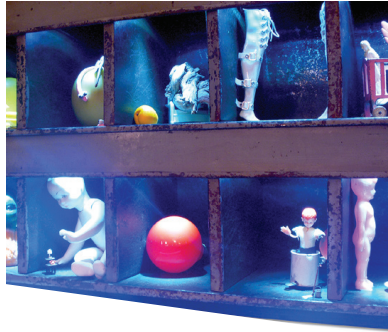


"Frank and Patty" – Still from "The Last Two Weeks" Box



"He's Already A Stage" – Still from "The Last Two Weeks" Box

A substantial art piece I was making at that time contained multiple scenes and spoken word audio pieces portraying a man who rarely called his significant other while traveling; an unhappy couple growing apart; and a man who already “had a stage and a property” and seemed set about a future that wasn’t inclusive of his partner. The piece was deeply autobiographical and pointing to my current experience, and yet, I didn’t make the connection.



The real kicker, though, is that I’d titled this work, “The Last Two Weeks”. It was for a solo gallery show in Germany, that I attended with my now ex. Some weeks after returning from that show, he told me he was having an affair.

I was processing, essentially, the last two weeks of my life as I knew it, while I made that artwork. The reason I’m sharing this? Our intuition is ever accessible, maybe even screaming at us in its quiet way to get us to listen. I was channeling signs but remaining unconscious to them, until the point at which they were undeniable, and I had a mess before me that I had to pick myself painfully up out of.

Maybe sometimes we don’t want to see what’s there, but the more we are willing to, the more freedom we open ourselves to. The good news is that conscious development of the perceptual muscles of seeing, feeling, and arranging your way to greater freedom undeniably strengthens the intuition and helps construct the road to trust.

I’m referring to that deeper trust that builds within when you make a practice of seeing the signs for what they are around you, listening for their guidance, and celebrating in

the awakening and validation they bring to your daily life. Once you’re really living on that road of trust, areas that used to feel heavy, will feel lighter. The shadows will have been blasted out of the corners. Happiness will move from a concept phase of intermittent flash dances when your blinders are comfortably on, to the larger mood held by the landscape in which your free spirit now stands, having burned all its weighted blankets and denial-wrapped experiences.

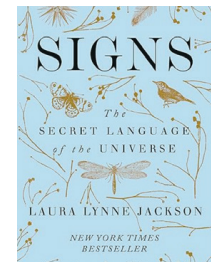
I am so thankful to have been shattered. There’s nothing now separating me from what my soul has always wanted for me. And my soul... speaks to me through signs. Trusting in the signs really is trusting in my own soul. What greater dance could a human have?

Call To Action:

Did something strike you in a moment recently? What objects, numbers, written messages, or animals are showing up for you today? Notice what comes to you and how it feels to receive the signs as significant!

Recommendations:

If you’d like to deepen your trust in signs, I highly recommend Laura Lynne Jackson’s book *Signs: The Secret Language of the Universe*. Her words brought me into more direct contact with the signs around me after losing my dad, and there’s maybe no greater gift than receiving that kind of comfort and support when going through a grieving process like that.



If you’re particularly drawn to animal wisdom, Ted Andrews has published various works that I’ve found helpful in bringing magic down to the matter-of-fact, and my own backyard. “Animal Speak” is one of my favorites.



An abandoned building in Mira, Italy

RESOLVE NOT TO RESOLVE



Pause Your Way Free

“You will continue to suffer if you have an emotional reaction to everything that is said to you. True power is sitting back and observing everything with logic.

True power is restraint. If words control you, that means everyone else can control you. Breathe and allow things to pass.”

-Warren Buffett

I think most of us have had the experience of something finally working itself out precisely because we got ourselves out of the way. We were hitting our heads on a wall to try to finish some project and only once we had stepped away and given it space and returned back to it the next day, did we see it all come together... sometimes even effortlessly. Everything needs room, everything needs to breathe, everything needs space to be healthy. That goes for ideas, it goes for our relationships, and it certainly goes for our responses to the upsets of life.

It's readily evidenced that silence holds great power. So why can it feel like such a tall order to live with the incorporation of that power when it's needed?

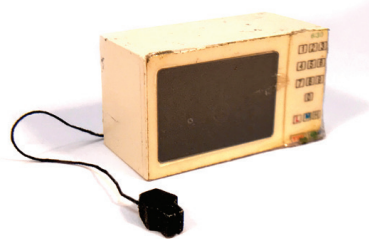
My beloved Uncle Gene was a man of few words because he respected their weight. It takes tremendous emotional and mental fortitude to be able to refrain from words when they will hurt, and consciously use them when they will support. And that's what he did. He taught me that it was possible for a human to do this.

This is at odds with the hardwired training we receive that sets us up to be knee-jerk reacting automatons. To respond immediately and according to the terms and rules of other reactive beings whose sense of worth and security is wrapped up in others' input.

Have you noticed that we often talk about having to put fires out in our work or personal lives, and run around doing just that, often moving from one anxiety filled experience to another.

How often do we stand back and ask ourselves if we really need to be firefighters at all... in order to extinguish fires?

Maybe we need to just unplug for a second.



Look at a tree. It doesn't go anywhere and yet its power seems to go everywhere. You feel that momentary grip of natural fear when encountering its formidable, branchy wild form in the dark. You know it knows things, and your words get knocked out of you as you get closer. It radiates that true silence that is plump with energy. You feel humbled by making its acquaintance.

The tree is what I aspire to be more like. Deeply rooted and holding space for all expression, without having to say a thing.

I think our race to resolve is literally making us sick. Look at a forest and ask yourself if it's racing to resolve anything.

Our training tells us that it's not okay to take space. It's not okay to go quiet for a while. It can even agitate others when we take a beat to consider how we'd like our words to fall out of our mouth in response to a simple question.

It's particularly driven home on women. A woman taking space is often branded as selfish, when in truth, it's one of the most selfless and kind acts one can offer everyone in their lives.

Immediate response is often hazardous in delicate situations with others. This need to resolve and get back to a place with a pretty bow on it again is something I'm consciously training myself to unlearn.



The 24 Hour Rule

“What you consent to can only be discovered by an uncritical observation of your reactions to life. Your reactions reveal where you live psychologically; and where you live psychologically determines how you live here in the outer visible world.” -Neville Goddard

If someone's communication has me “triggered” in any way—even filled with anger—I employ one of my most important tools in the “unlearning” process: The 24 Hour Rule

The real work in the face of conflict is to not react.

The first step is to give myself a day, and everything works out better from there.

That day is not easy, but I have found that if I can both refrain from reacting when in an emotionally charged moment, as well as give myself the permission to not respond on someone else's timeline, I regain my inner centeredness and power. From that grounded place of clarity, the proper words will come. Or... they *won't come*. This is where the power of the pause gets very nonconformist.

If you've been asking your inner guide for authentic words for another to come, and you've been holding space for a long time, and they still don't want to emerge, ask yourself if the reason you feel you need to have words with someone is because you feel uncomfortable sitting with the non-communication. If you are tempted to "resolve" in an inauthentic way because you can't tolerate the inner work, unlearning, and strengthening it takes to become comfortable with the uncomfortable or the judgment of another, focus on remaining seated in the wordless place just a little longer.

That little bit longer may become, again, just a little bit longer. And eventually, you'll have a new muscle developing inside you that frees you from the obsession of needing to be approved of; of putting your power in someone else's hands.

Because at the very core of this work is the theme of needing to be liked. I struggled greatly with this one.

My work now is in being okay that I may not be liked if I'm being authentic with myself. And that any discomfort brought up in another if I am being true to myself is just as much of an opportunity for them to grow, as it is for me, by maintaining that authenticity.



"Time" – Manhattan, the CLOSER Collection

- Can you *not* race to resolve something right away?
- Can you let fires die out of their own natural accord without adding acid to them?
- Can you hold silence when you know someone is probably judging you for not responding?
- Can you sit with someone not liking you for 24 hours? What about longer?
- Can you let the emotion of a scene completely fizzle out before considering action?
- Can you maintain “nonresponse” for as long as it takes to get grounded in what’s true for you?



I have a shaman named Birdie, and I’m filled with gratitude that I’ve been able to work regularly with her for many years now. She will sometimes refer to her Cherokee grandmother, who was masterly at communicating nonverbally. At holding that firm, tree-like power in the face of any confrontation or chaos brought her way with the expectation of her engagement.

She would instead hold up her chin, look slightly down at her confronter, and like a rock, tower above that conflict and shrink them without words.

My husband Johnny and I have come to refer to this stance as “Cherokee Chin Up”. We remind each other of it frequently as we support each other in holding to our commitment to respond to situations in our lives with strength and authenticity, rather than with what is expected of us. Birdie chuckles over this branded phrase, and also puts it into use now.

Call To Action:

Is someone upset with you and expecting a response to their attack? Are you feeling a burning need to respond to someone only because you can’t emotionally or mentally get settled until “it’s resolved”? I encourage you to employ the 24-hour rule and develop your “Pause Muscle”. Hold your seat. Be a tree. Stay non-responsive until response feels born of strength, rather than social conditioning. Give yourself twenty-four hours to allow natural diffusion and dissipation to play its part.



Remember that this pulling in is an act of self-love. So often our perspectives change when they’re given a little space, and we end up being thankful to ourselves on the other side that we had the endurance to maintain non-responsiveness. It’s what allows wisdom the chance to work the room. And it means a lot less of (often regretted) emotional clean up later.

Recommendations:

Here’s an affirmation I made for you:

“I resolve not to resolve. Because I’m playing the long game, where truth wins every time. I can’t make anyone wake up to their truth. But I can settle into mine. I am like the rooted tree, watching the frenzy around me, yet no longer getting sucked into it. Silence is my birthright. All of nature wants me to adopt it, and to walk in its power right now. And that I shall.”

If you’d like to deepen your work in this area and could use the very best in support, I highly recommend connecting with Birdie! You can find her at www.4directions.nyc

“It is not the world but your assumptions that change. An assumption brings the invisible into sight. It is nothing more nor less than seeing with the eye of God, i.e., Imagination.”

-Neville Goddard

IMAGINATION SHAPES YOUR LIFE



Assume Your Way Free

“Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life because you become what you believe.”

-Oprah Winfrey

Once you’ve developed and flexed your muscles for seeing, feeling, arranging, trusting, and pausing your way to deeper personal freedom, you’re ready for the fun part.

It’s time to employ the Law of Assumption to manifest what you know you were made to experience in this life.

It turns out imagination is our greatest asset. And why wouldn’t the core of all creative process be the key to creating the scenarios we’d like to live?

We are creation. How we feel the things in our imagination is how the life all around us unfolds, rather exactly.

We’ve all probably heard the “fake it ‘til you make it” concept or may be aware of The Secret and various other Law of Attraction teachings—some maybe feeling more hyped up than others and some feeling insightful or true in varying degrees.

If you're like me, maybe you've dabbled in applying certain manifestation principles and, in frustration, have judged yourself for the failure to attain what you'd committed your focus to.

Also, if you're like me, you may periodically take stock of your life and see some already ripened fruits of manifestation, born of seeds planted in the past; it's undeniable that you have in fact been manifesting all along, and there's so much gratitude to feel for what you've already brought in.



"It's All Happening" – Still from "The Sasha Box"

All I can say is, something radically changed for me when a friend suggested Neville Goddard's book *The Power of Awareness*.

Neville was born in 1905 and died in 1972. A mystic, he was captivated by the true meaning of the Bible as non-secular history and as a teaching of the pathway to spiritual awakening and true liberation. He is considered by many as one of the founding leaders of the Law of Attraction movement.

I got the audio book and found myself willfully programming myself with it, in its entirety, once or twice a day for a period of time. Mostly while taking long walks when I was able to apply all of my focused attention to the process. And it changed me, permanently.

If you are curious to dive into this gem to see how your life beautifies as a result, I encourage you to get yourself a copy.

I will leave you with some passages, to give you a sense of where this experience may take you, and to indicate why I find these principles the ultimate perspective shifting fodder for attaining an empowered and liberated reality.

[First, a disclaimer: This work was written by a man in the '50s, so most references to "person" or "manifestor" are given the "he" pronoun—as is God, as that's the way the Bible that is frequently referenced was written. As a feminist in this era, who is deeply spiritual yet completely detached from religious dogma and any ideas of God as a 'man', I read between the lines because the meat of it (though socially outdated) is just so powerful. I'd like to believe that if Neville were alive now and releasing an updated version, he'd revise some language to reflect the times and a true desire for inclusion born of the character I would believe and hope he did have.]

“Your concept of yourself determines the world in which you live. What appear to you as circumstances, conditions, and even material objects are really only the products of your own consciousness. Nature, then, as a thing or a complex of things external to your mind, must be rejected. You and your environment cannot be regarded as existing separately. You and your world are one.

Therefore, you must turn from the objective appearance of things to the subjective center of things—your consciousness—if you truly desire to know the cause of the phenomena of life and how to use this knowledge to realize your fondest dreams. In the midst of the apparent contradictions, antagonisms, and contrasts of your life, there is only one principle at work, only your consciousness operating. Difference does not consist in variety of substance but in variety of arrangement of the same cause substance: your consciousness.

The world moves with motiveless necessity. By this is meant that it has no motive of its own, but is under the necessity of manifesting your concept. Consciousness is the arrangement of your mind. And your mind is always arranged in the image of all you believe and consent to as true. The rich man, poor man, beggar man, or thief, are not different minds but different arrangements of the same mind in the same sense that a piece of steel when magnetized differs not in substance from its demagnetized state, but in the arrangement and order of its molecules.

Man’s chief delusion is his conviction that there are causes other than his own state of consciousness. You make your future dream a present fact by assuming the feeling of your wish fulfilled. You create an ideal of the person you want to be and then assume that you are already that person. If this assumption is persisted in until it becomes your dominant feeling, the attainment of your ideal is inevitable.

Perpetual construction of future states without the consciousness of already being them, that is, picturing your desire without actually assuming the feeling of the wish fulfilled, is the fallacy and mirage of mankind. It is simply futile daydreaming. The heart is the primary organ of sense. Hence, the first cause of experience. When you look on the heart, you are looking at your assumptions. Assumptions determine your experience. Watch your assumption with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Assumptions have the power of objective realization. Every event in the visible world is the result of an assumption or idea in the unseen world. The present moment is all important, for it is only in the present moment that our assumptions can be controlled. The future must become the present in your mind if you would wisely operate.”

Call To Action:

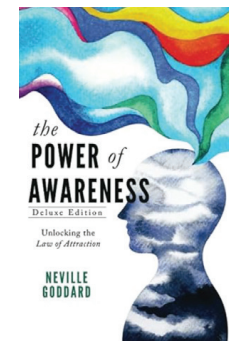
What does a life of freedom look like to you? What are you creating, who are you with, where are you living, what fills your days, what does achievement mean?



We are everything. We are the stars. We are all thought.

Just as we have always been free, but have been conditioned to think and act otherwise, imagine what reclaiming your freedom means in terms of your assuming whatever shape in universal terms you want to.

I encourage you to envision your dream and boldly assume it AS already here. Act FROM the place that it’s already been attained. And watch for evidence that something is changing.



Recommendation:

The Power of Awareness
by Neville Goddard



Photo Credit: John Fletcher

STOP TRYING



Rest Your Way Free

“The future becomes the present when you imagine that you already are what you will be when your assumption is fulfilled. Be still (least action) and know that you are that what you desire to be. The end of longing should be being. Translate your dream into being.”

-Neville Goddard

It turns out that effort may not be the way to attain our dreams. Once you’ve started to put “assuming” into practice, it’s time for the counterintuitive magic key to your success: least action.

Let’s start with the below passage from Chapter 14 of Neville Goddard’s “The Power of Awareness”, called “The Effortless Way”:

“The principle of least action governs everything in physics from the path of a planet to the path of a pulse of light. Least action is the minimum of energy multiplied by the minimum of time. Therefore, in moving from your present state to the state desired, you must use the minimum of energy and take the shortest possible time.

Your journey from one state of consciousness to another is a psychological one. So, to make the journey, you must employ the psychological equivalent of least action, and the psychological equivalent is mere assumption. The day you fully realize the power of assumption, you discover that it works in complete conformity with this principle. It works by means of attention minus effort. Thus, with least action through an assumption, you hurry without haste and reach your goal without effort.

The future becomes the present when you imagine that you already are what you will be when your assumption is fulfilled. Be still (least action) and know that you are that what you desire to be. The end of longing should be being. Translate your dream into being.”

Every time I stress over achieving something, it never brings me closer to my intended result. Abundance comes to the receptive. Receptivity is slow, open, and listening.

When you calm and center yourself and make relaxing literally your only objective, and then you hold in mind what you want to manifest, the likelihood that you'll get to the 'feeling place' of that desired manifestation is high. When you're feeling good, assume your manifestation. Assume your dream. Be it. This is the state that will allow your dreams to take root and grow.



So whenever I'm feeling overwhelmed or anxious, I remind myself that I'm out of the zone of my manifestation powers, and the way back to that zone is simple: relax, get the energy back to a good place. That's it.

For me, I like a long walk every day to ground myself and connect with the trees, harbor, and wildlife. I listen to ebooks

or music that get me into that good zone. My mission is to get relaxed and positively juiced up. Once I've clicked into the zone, I play with manifestation from that state. Holding visions and getting myself to the feeling place of them.

I'm often reminded by this activity of how effortlessly solutions to things I'd been working on can just pop in. I might have been laboring over issues in my workday for hours and then, in a flash, clarity over what to do is there.

It still surprises me that less effort leads to more reward, time and time again. It's completely the opposite of how Western culture has conditioned us to think and act. But when you look at statistics on how much of this culture is actually feeling "happy", well...

I'm enjoying this particular "unlearning" that is undeniably enriching my daily experience.

The Cuteness Factor

Another trick I use to shortcut my way to feeling relaxed and in the right zone for manifestation is something I call "The Cuteness Factor".

For me, even just glancing at a picture of a cute child or animal I love will light me up with joy.

I have some pictures of my niece and nephew and my in-law's dog (for whom my husband and I are the honorary dogsitters) on the upper left-hand side of my computer's desktop. Throughout my workday, I will simply look to that corner and instantly get a cuteness rush.



Joy is like relaxation, amped up. So I consider The Cuteness Factor a great tool for attaining the manifestation zone. Taking things next level, and moving from interaction with photos alone to spending more in-person time with these joy machines, well, it's a tremendous dream accelerator.

Make Relaxing Your “Work”

A final word on Western culture and the ill training I feel we've received on this subject is this: If you believe in hard work, as I've undoubtedly been hardwired to, and find a break from the principle of working hard to achieve your dreams almost daunting, let relaxing become your new work.

I mean this, quite literally!

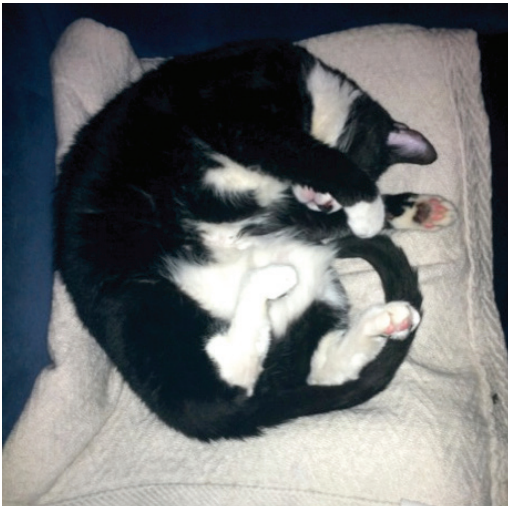
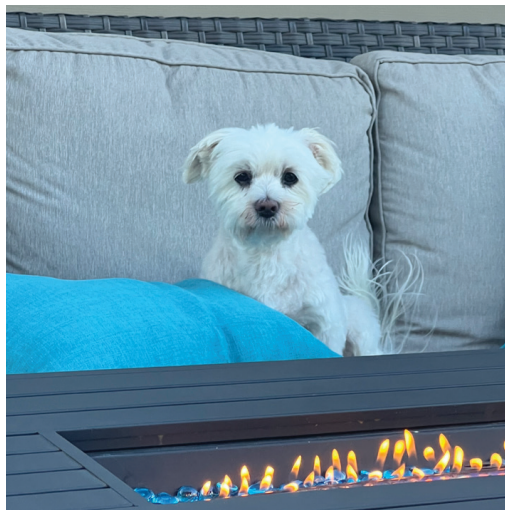
For me, when I really got that getting into a relaxed, non-work mode was going to be the ticket to my dreams, I committed to getting to that state as part of my daily work routine.

Because, if it's my job, well, I'm going to do it!

As not only a Westerner, but a double Capricorn who also happens to be a horse in Chinese astrology, my very nature is to work hard; to climb that treacherous terrain in pursuit of a goal, and to carry a heavy load while I run. So this trick of making relaxing my work, totally works for me!

Also just taking a break from my desk more frequently and doing *anything else at all* that will provide some relaxation—even washing dishes or going to the mailbox—was discovered to have a more profound impact on my energy state than I ever thought it would.

Keeping myself from the “hitting my head on the wall” or burnout state as a practice, combined with designated peri-



ods of focused “doing nothing as my work”, has opened up a whole new chapter of freedom in my life.

This understanding has also done wonders for how I consider the value of time and its use. My past self found it hard to prioritize almost anything over work. And yet, I love my friends and family and understand the effort necessary to maintain these relationships. But whereas I may have felt it harder to commit to social activities that would take me away from my focus before this rewiring, I now see these activities as an opportunity to not only expand into relaxation and joy, but draw my dreams closer.

What a wonderful thing it is to wake up to this truth! Not only is relaxing throughout my day a necessity if I am to manifest my dreams, enjoying the company of friends is now considered mandatory. Put quite simply, I not only have the license to have more fun; I am tasked with it.

Call To Action:

Block out a three to four hour window of time on your calendar. Make it your job during that time to “do nothing.” By doing nothing, I mean doing whatever comes to you freely to do. No agenda. No rules. No censoring. No checking your messages or emails. Your job is to get relaxed and simply feel good.

When you are relaxed, have fun holding in mind the life you’re looking to create. Envision a specific scene until you feel the feelings you expect you would if it were real. For example, imagine you’re shaking the hand of someone you just signed a deal with, or you’re feeling the warm sand under your legs as you sit looking out at the water from your new beach retreat, or you’re at a podium on stage receiving an achievement award, or you’re looking out at a sea of kids with joy



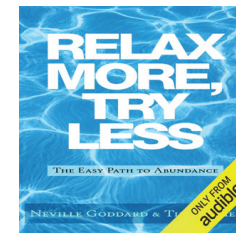
across their faces because of the aid you were able to bring to their lives through your passionate mission. Whatever works for you!



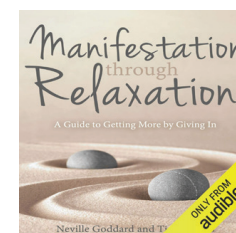
Once you’ve gotten to a feeling space while holding your vision and you have a smile on your face and in your heart, I want you to congratulate yourself. What you just did was the most important work you possibly could have done. Now, schedule this work more regularly, and see what happens.

Recommendations:

The way I was exposed to this principle of relaxing was through two books that I consumed the audiobook versions of on my walks. Yes, Neville Goddard is the mastermind behind these books as well! Although they are very similar, I highly recommend starting with the first and moving onto the second, as it expands on the first with additional examples and deepens the overall message, in my experience.



The first is: *Relax More, Try Less: The Easy Path to Abundance* by Neville Goddard and Tim Grimes.



The second is: *Manifestation Through Relaxation: A Guide to Getting More by Giving In*, also by Neville Goddard and Tim Grimes.



Outside the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

IN CLOSING



It bears repeating:

“You and me, we were always Free. We just find ourselves in a plane of existence that has a bad reputation for obstructing that freedom. So, it is up to us to reclaim it for ourselves.”

-Sherry Mills

Our environment and our experiences have an inherent beauty in them, no matter how messed up and difficult they are. And that is why every act of personal liberation is a kind act toward society. Every moment where joy is sparked is a kind act toward the earth. And most of all, personal empowerment feels amazing, doesn't it? Stripping the chains off, the guilty expectations, the disingenuous chatter—and then using your voice or your silence, your inner rock star or a cute animal, to set you free—it's all there awaiting your Yes.

My hope is that your exploration of the tools in this mini book might instill more of that freedom and joy in your daily life. Community is the key to growth, and I'm here for you. Please ping me and let me know how you're doing!

Freely Yours,
Sherry Mills



Me in Hollywood. Photo Credit: Nathalie Michel

ABOUT SHERRY

Sherry's twenty-year multimedia career has been centered on inspiring new perspectives.

When Sherry first moved to New York City, she began capturing "street paintings" with her film camera—found, unadulterated scrawls on walls, splattered sidewalk paint, and street lane stains—which evolved into the project A CLOSER NY.

Named to represent Metromedia Technologies' Outdoor and the Arts Program, A CLOSER NY won the support of the Manhattan Borough President for its ability to open minds to the beauty hiding in plain sight. It went on to receive special feature by Fourth Arts Block in the form of scaffolding space and Clear Channel Outdoor's Local Spirit campaign in the form of billboard space around the city. A short film made about the project, entitled *Sherry Mills on ArtUP*, won entry into the HollyShorts Film Festival.

Sherry's later commission-based assemblage work instead focused on beautifying one's self-perspective; using miniature objects and collage, Sherry constructed three-dimensional artworks to reflect the personalities and dreams of her interviewees. Both forms of art were showcased in numerous group and solo shows in NYC and Germany.

Sherry's work has also been featured by USA Today, SCOPE Basel, Communication Arts, and NYC TV. Her style attracted modeling roles with Swiss Air, MAC, and Vanity Fair, and her collectors have come out of MTV, The Met, HBO, and The New York Times.

After a challenging split from a long-term relationship, Sherry found comfort in using her voice and sitting down at the mic with others to discuss periods of life transition—from cancer recovery to losing loved ones. She assembled

an award-winning team of sound engineers, composers, and photographers to begin building out Season 1 of a podcast, when she discovered firsthand the key issues all podcasters faced with discoverability and monetization.

Quickly growing passionate about solving the search and discovery issues for the spoken word industry at large, Sherry and the Founder of Big City Radio, Mike Kakoyiannis, put their heads together and formed the technology start-up Tree Goat Media to do just that. They have since raised millions of dollars and are building a proprietary Artificial Intelligence capable of connecting people with the specific moments in all of spoken word media... that they *need* to hear.

Why?

Because sometimes something you *hear* in a moment... can also set you free.

Stay tuned!

Visit Sherry's site for more info, and other ways to connect:

www.sherrymills.com



"Blushing Hard" - Wall in SoHo, Manhattan - CLOSER Collection



*Find beauty in the pain, and the unlikely place.
From heartbreak and illness, to wardrobe and landscape.
Because perspective is what sets you free. And right inside
your strife, is the greatest artwork of your life.*

I've been on a mental health journey for as long as I can remember. Through it all, I've managed to stay playful and curious in this game of life, no matter the amount of pain and loss it's shown to me, too.

It could be that I've discovered that the simplest shift in perspective can be lifesaving.

This book is filled with many of my "go-to" methods for feeling more freedom in my daily life. I hope it will inspire a new approach or two that will make a meaningful difference in yours.

– Sherry Mills

