



“Make your vocation your vacation”

by Dr. Yvonne Sum, Personal Coach and International Speaker.

I was watching my children say goodbye to my husband one morning. It was my turn to take the kids to school as Ken had an early appointment to make at the practice. Such is the schedule we have to organize these days!

Jett, my 5 year-old son, remarked: “Dad, do you have to go to work?”
To which Ken replied: “Yes Jett, I have to go to work.”

Xian, my 3 year-old girl piped out: “Why don’t you want to stay and play with us, Daddy?”

Ken pondered and then replied: “You know what. Those are such great questions you have asked. Let me say it this way. Jett, it’s not about ‘having to go to work.’ I choose to go to work right now because I have promised someone that I will meet and work with them. I would also love to be with both of you right now, and so, I will commit to come home tonight at 6 o’clock to play then. Life is about making choices and the time to do them in, so we can do all that we love, with whomever we want to, and whenever we wish.”

Ken’s reply worked like a charm. “See you at 6 o’clock, Daddy!” the children chorused as they energetically waved their father off to his car. No tears and whining. Simply because they know their Daddy always keeps his word. As for Ken, not a tinge of guilt for leaving his kids that morning. And why should there be any? If anything, there should only be pride in keeping to one’s promise. To live as our word. The children are obviously proud of their Daddy. And I too am so proud of all of them.

That little morning scene often replays in my mind when I feel like I “have to do” something, “must be” somewhere, “should be like” some way It seems to me that we have been “should-ing” ourselves into less than compromising situations, by being overly passive about making decisions, lest they become our sole responsibility ! How did that happen? When did we start short-changing ourselves in the process of making choices?

Conversely, we can choose to live by a different maxim: “Life is about making choices and the time to do them in, so we can do all that we love, with whomever we want to, and whenever we wish”

As you step back to look at what is happening in your life, notice what choices you are making lately.

Or do you feel like you are at choice at all?

How aware are you of what you are saying?

Do you live as your word?

Are you curious that your body responds to whatever you formulate in your mind?

Are you clear on what is in your mind and what you want?

Do you believe that you can truly do whatever you want, and be whomever you want, whenever you want?

If you believe you can, then read on.

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If you believe that you are at effect of things beyond your control, imagine what it would be like if you were able to change the outcome by choice.

Find your independence

So if you have been “should-ing” yourself to do things, and imposing “these are the ways we have to do things” mentality on yourself, laying blame on external forces that “make” you conform – then seemingly, you are not being accountable and responsible for your own decisions, and by extension, yourself.

Things simply happen to you. You are just a victim. You are never at cause.

Let me bring forth the thoughts of one Andrew Cohen, dubbed one of the world’s leading thinkers and spiritually enlightened people. Cohen was in France in August 2004 when he spoke about accepting one’s independence :

“If we are deadly serious, we take responsibility for our own liberation. That doesn't mean that we don't receive all the help that the universe has to give, but a big part of authentically receiving the help that the universe has to give is accepting our independence.

“We say, “Yes, now I am willing, I will do this.” Too often, we are given all the help we could ever need, but because we are not serious, we drop it. So paradoxically, unless we embrace an authentic posture of independence, we're never going to be able to accept help or be of real help to anyone else.

“Our ability to transform ourselves, help each other, and ultimately change this world is completely dependent upon our capacity to embrace the posture of independence, of self-reliance.

“And if we're not willing to accept full responsibility for our own liberation and our own salvation, the whole world suffers the consequences.”

Are you willing to accept full responsibility and accountability for your own liberation?

Are you serious about accepting help or be a real help to someone else?

Are you embracing an authentic posture of independence?

Or are you just a victim?

Say “Yes, please!”

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Scenario: I am walking to my car pushing a heavy cart load of groceries with a toddler in tow, and very pregnant with his expectant sibling. A woman stops and offers to help me get the cart to my car. Politely, I tell her "Thanks, but no."

What benefit did I get from playing the martyr (synonym: victim) in this situation? How much easier would it have been to say "Yes, please!" ?
Result: Accepting help means I just had to contend with the toddler and the woman who offered help would have been given the opportunity to feel great about being a good Samaritan.

Isn't accepting help here about embracing true independence?

Since then, I have learnt to stop myself from running this typical response and to replace it with a more useful program of pausing and saying, "Yes, please!"

What patterns are you running in your life?

Running your own brain

In Chopra's "The Book of Secrets", he writes:

"...The same visual cortex in the rear of my skull allows me to see an object – a tree, a face, the sky – whether I am seeing it in memory, in a dream, in a photo, or standing before me. The locations of brain cell activity shift slightly from one to the other, which is why I can distinguish among a dream, a photo, and the real thing, yet the fundamental process is constantly taking place. I am manufacturing a tree, a face, or the sky from what is actually random tangle of spidery nerves shooting bursts of chemicals and electrical charges in my brain and around my body. No matter how hard I try, I will never find a single pattern of chemicals and charges in the shape of a tree, a face, or any other shape. There is just a firestorm of electrochemical activity.

"This embarrassing problem – that there is no way to prove the existence of an outside world – undermines the basis of materialism.... You are not in the world; the world is in you."

If what we perceive as the world out there is really happening inside ourselves as electrochemical activity, then perhaps it is true that we can manifest all of our wishes. If that is so, why not start with things we are passionate about and love to do? Let us be inspired with thoughts that will awaken all parts of the universe (be it within or without of ourselves) to conspire to create what we aspire to!

Don't miss out on the present.

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Too often, we live for a future that has not yet arrived; reflect on a past that has gone by; only to miss out on the present that is here and now.

It is only in the fleeting moment of the “here and now” that we can truly change anything. Think about how precious the present is in your life.

Let’s go back to Ken and the kids. Ken made some choices that day, including choosing not to feel guilty about leaving the kids that morning to get on with his day. Planning to be 100% present for his beloved kids at 6 pm that evening freed him to be totally present to enjoy his work that morning. He loves being in that frame of mind, don’t you?

Juggling with work-life-balance is a common phenomenon particularly for parents these days. Imagine what it would be like to know that you can make the choice to have it all – your work, your family and your self ... where the balance is a destination and not the journey.

Are you putting plans in place so that you have time to live in the moment – and not the past or future?
Are you doing what you love?
Are you who you really want to be?

If you are, congratulations! If not, perhaps it is time to take charge of you!

Do what you love. Creating the ideal in your mind will communicate the changes in your body to actualise what you truly love to be. Make your vocation your vacation.

Self-coach by all means. Better still, imagine what it would be like to get a professional coach to fast-track you a non-judgmental someone who can skillfully hold the mirror to yourself, to be the sounding board to help co-create inner possibilities in your mind and to hold your feet to the fire to make it all happen ... and when it happens, to celebrate with you!

You’ll never know if you never go. There’s nothing to stop you but yourself. Go for it. Try it!

About the Author:

Dr. Yvonne Sum is on a quest to create learning partnerships using Neuro Linguistic Programming and Neuro Semantics to realise human potential. She expresses this passion through her roles as an international speaker, writer, transformational corporate facilitator, executive and parenting Meta-Coach, business woman, wife and mother.

Dr. Sum has also developed a parenting program, Transformational Leadership Challenge (TLC), that celebrates the heroes in families and empowers them and their children to live their Life Vision.

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