

0% Effort, 100% Return

What if I told you, you could get everything you wanted in life with no effort? In fact, what if I told you the secret to getting your biggest dreams is by following your joy and living life in a *State of Ease*. Does it sound too good to be true? Well, it is possible and here is why - **Effort is a pushing energy; it includes exertion and is focused on achievement.** We live in a society where all of those words are rewarded, but the truth is, that true accomplishments occur without any of those words. I grew up in a family that taught good values, like work hard and put in a lot of effort and what I found was that the perfect, Type A child I became, got me very far in my career but not very far in the joy of life.

I have learned that the big dreams **do not come with effort, they come with Ease.** This is totally counterintuitive in the society we live in today. I have been a classic overachiever my entire life. I remember as a child, doing my homework on the bus ride home from school. I didn't want to *waste* those 20 minutes and every day, my goal was to finish my homework before I got off the bus. Many times, I came close to missing my stop because I *had* to finish before I could get off the bus. I thought the other kids who were laughing, playing and chatting, were wasting their time, I would get so much more done than them. It may not be surprising to hear that that type of a child grew into an overachieving adult.

Seven years into my career as a Management Consultant, I was beyond burned out. I remember my father, a Federal Government Employee and immigrant, telling me that companies do not expect you to work more than 40 hours. He said, "they will think you are slow and cannot get your work done in 40 hours." I laughed at this. He clearly did not know how the world had changed. He didn't understand that I was considered a top performer. I was a "Go To" girl. Everyone knew they could count on me. I was dedicated and I was being rewarded in my career. I was exhausted and not really happy, but... I was making a lot of money and considered a top performer by my peers and my Managers. I assumed this was a good thing and that I was going places.

One day, I fell off the path of perfection I was on. I went through a bad break up, that had left me so sad all the time. All of the sudden, the career, all the perks, lost their shine. My perfect life I had planned out perfectly had huge cracks in it. I was smart enough to know this would pass, but in the moment I was not able to perform and barely able to keep up appearances. Ultimately, it was the best thing that ever happened to me, because, in the moment of deep dissatisfaction, I wrote down all the things that I wanted in my ideal life (the life that I was nowhere near living). I wrote that I did not want to work 9-5 or be stuck at a desk. I wanted to take yoga class in the middle of the day. I wanted to work from home. I wanted to help better the community. I wanted to work with children and parents. And, the list continued. Oh, and I wanted to do all of this while working half as many hours and making double what I made then. Within two years, I was doing all of that. I was working half the hours and making double my salary. Everyone asks me how I did it, and at the time, I really did not know.

However, I went back and reviewed what I did, coupled with my experience in corporations and with peak performance, I came up with the three key ingredients that when mixed together got me out of

burnout and into a life that I love! What I found was that a few of my actions, practiced regularly, had a HUGE impact on my ability to create my dream life.

The **first ingredient** is to list all the things that you love to do; the things that bring you joy! And, these are not work activities (per se) but other activities. For me, it was dance class, yoga, going for walks, and spending time with my nieces and nephews. I went to soccer games, grandparents breakfasts (even though I was an Aunt), read in their classrooms. All these activities made me happy and brought me great joy! One of the secrets I have learned is the most successful leaders do not exert force; instead, they focus clearly on what they want, believe fully that they will achieve it, and follow their joy. **This is part of the beauty of the feminine energy, to be clear in what we want and allow it to come to us without exerting force.** It is one of the gifts given to women. But, when not used, can have detrimental effects on how we operate. What I see more and more today are women who are not following their joy. Their reason, they simply do not have the time. And, the less they follow their joy, the harder it is for them to achieve their goal. I found the fastest way to achieve a goal does not involve effort, but rather, belief the goal will be achieved and living a life of joy.

The **second ingredient** is to focus on feelings rather than actions. As an overachiever, this was a shocker for me! What I was doing was much less important than how I was feeling! The actions are unimportant. Read that again. **The actions are unimportant.** What is important is the feeling, the belief, the *being*. The doing is negligible. After I wrote my dream life (kind of a vision board, but with words and process flows), I never really looked at it again. I hung it on my wall, so subconsciously I probably saw it all the time, but I never really read it again, until I was taking it down two years later and shockingly realized I had achieved EVERY SINGLE thing I had written down. The actions were unimportant, but the time I took to create that board and the feeling of freedom and joy I had when I imagined that life, miraculously transformed into it occurring.

The **third key ingredient** is taking care of yourself, and only you know exactly what that means for you. I remember being exhausted and deciding that I just did not give a [*blank*] anymore. I was heartbroken, really heartbroken. And, I simply did not care anymore. And, in that state, all I had energy to do was anything that would get me to stop feeling the pain I was in. I was an overachiever who was leaving work early to go for walks; I was sure I was having some sort of nervous breakdown. I was scared, but too tired in that moment to do anything other than the little things that brought me joy. I did not learn this in a positive context of achieving my dreams through ease; I learned this through sheer mental and emotional exhaustion.

Once I came up with these three keys, I decided to test them out and ensure they worked (without a heartache attached). I took a year to see if I followed my joy, did not worry about the specific actions or exert effort, and took great care of myself, could I make the same amount as the previous year? I did! I made more than the previous year, working even less and taking even better care of myself. Since then, I have consistently made more each year for the past five years, each year working significantly less hours than the year before. I only say yes to work I really want to do, so it does not feel like “work”. I do a lot of “work” for free because I love what I do, and somehow, the money keeps showing up. But, I

know now, if I chased the money or “tried” to do something, it would not work nearly as well as just doing what I love and trusting that it will all work out financially.

In yoga, there is a philosophy about balancing between ease and effort. I have found this philosophy to not only apply to yoga, but to all areas of life. There is a time for action. And, when that time comes, it feels really, really, really good to take the action, it does not feel like effort. Do you have moments where you are working harder than ever before (which appears to the outside world as putting in tons of effort), but it doesn't feel like you are working at all? Think of a time where you felt that way. Were you feeling stressed and exhausted or joyful and exhilarated? That is what 0% effort, 100% return means. It does not mean you will never “work hard” again. It just means that when you are working hard, it will not feel like it. There is no strain, exertion, exhaustion – it will be joyful.

Take a moment and ask yourself, “In my life, is it possible for me to do less and get more done? Is it possible for me to just let go, and allow it to miraculously get done? Is it possible for me to just do what makes me happy and be totally successful?” What answer did you get? I have proven in my life, time and time again, that the answer to all of these questions is a loud, resounding YES! In order to live a life of ease, while still accomplishing all your hopes and desires, I will ask for the remainder of this chapter for you to act as if the answer is Yes! A joyful Yes! Even, if you are absolutely sure it is a No. Allow yourself a moment, here with me, to step into the field of possibility.

While these three ingredients sound easy enough, it is hard for many to take them and apply them in a way that they see astounding results. So, I created a **30 day challenge** for you to really apply these three ingredients and get results!

30 Day Challenge

First, the fun part, choose a goal that you want occur in your life within the next thirty days. A goal that is SO BIG that if it happened in the next 30 days, you would know without a doubt what I am saying is true. Some example of BIG goals include, making \$x to pay off all of my debt (make sure the number is BIG), weighing x pounds (make it your dream weight), spending 10 quality hours each week with my children with no distractions and full of energy, rekindling my marriage to be full of romance and quality time, the 10 items on my to do list that have been on my list for month getting done easily and effortlessly. Whatever you choose, I want it to seem out of reach to you – not totally impossible, just out of the realm of your current reality.

Then, do one thing every single day that brings you pure joy. It may be eating a cupcake, leaving work 30 minutes early for no reason, asking someone else to pick up or drop off your kids from practice, ordering pizza one night for dinner, or something else that seems “irresponsible” to you at this moment, but would allow you a true break. Do one thing for you each day. It could be not doing something you do because you “should”. For example, if you work out regularly because you “should”, skip it! If you are eating healthy because you “should”, take a day, a week or even the entire month off and just eat whatever sounds good. I know what I am saying may seem CRAZY, but crazy is what is going to get you results. If you were going to get there doing what you are doing today, you would have gotten there

already. Getting the life of your dreams involves you doing something completely different, some may even say, crazy.

Summary:

1. Clearly state one goal that you would love to see huge progress on in the next 30 days.
 - a. Be very specific. Have someone review it and tell you what they understood your goal to be.
 - b. Write it down!
 - c. Check to ensure it is not a “should” goal. If when you read this goal, you feel sad, it is not the right goal. If you feel happy and free, it is the right goal. Remember – the entire goal is about finding your JOY!
2. Do one thing that brings you joy every day for the next 30 days. Each day, do not skip a day. But, you can do more than one a day 😊. You have some options on what you do:
 - a. You can add one joyous activity to your life (for example, sleeping in, going for a walk, taking a dance class, or my favorite, or taking quiet time for yourself.
 - b. Or, you can remove one “should” activity each day (for example, I should stay late at work to complete this, I should attend this optional meeting, I should cook dinner (vs. order out, go out, etc), or I should work out (vs. laying on the couch!)
 - c. Or, BONUS, you can remove a “should” activity and replace it with a “joyful” activity. For example, skip the gym and take a nap instead.
3. Journal daily (3-5 minutes) on what you did for yourself that day and the feelings that came up when you either do not do what you think you “should” or when you did (or thought of doing) something that makes you truly happy. These feelings of discomfort are what have been stopping you all along.
4. As for the goal, do not think about it at all for 30 days. Write it down and forget about it. If something comes up that would help you progress towards that goal, and it brings you JOY to do it, then do it (chances are it will not feel like “effort” anyways). Otherwise, just put the goal out of your mind for 30 days. The point is to show you how by putting in no effort (zero percent) that you can and will get 100% return on what you really want. Let’s really test it out!

Once you have your goal, immediately start on doing one thing for yourself each day. Here is the challenge that will likely occur as you start taking wonderful care of yourself... you will start having some strong feelings and the little voice in your head will start talking bringing up feelings. These may be feelings of guilt, not being good enough, being selfish or the painful “who are you to want...”. This is GREAT! Here is why... these are the EXACT THINGS that have stopped you from achieving what you wanted earlier. These are the messages that are holding you back. I want you to write down as many of these as you can catch. **And, when you write these down and look at them (i.e., shine a light on the monster), they tend to lose their power. Some of them actually become funny when you write it down. For example, “who are you to take care of yourself and rest”? Um, the person who is responsible for my health and mental well being... that’s who!** And, maybe most importantly, you will see how the entire world keeps turning even if you miss the PTA meeting, burn the brownies, or skip a meeting. And, once you realize that, you can go easier on yourself. When you go easier on yourself, you

will bring more ease into your life, and once you have more ease, you will get the biggest returns you have ever seen – Promise!

The key ingredient for this to work is JOY! Choose to do something that genuinely makes you happy, not something that “should” make you happy. For example, let’s say you love to paint and decided as part of the challenge that you will sign up for a painting class because that brings you joy but the day of the class do not feel like going (because there is something else you would rather do, or you are too tired), what should you do? If you said, skip the class you love, you guessed correctly! Once a day, indulge yourself, treat yourself, love yourself, act as if you are the MOST IMPORTANT person in your life and that making you happy is your most important life responsibility. When you do, you will see huge leaps towards your dream.

On a deeper level, this works because when you create in a state of joy, you create more amazing things, easier! Now, more than ever, the world needs your heart, your love, your joy – that is how we will create an amazing world community. We can’t get there if you are too exhausted to share your joy and light with the world. So, go easy on yourself. Do less, rest more, take walks, smile, laugh, be happy and know that you are “accomplishing” so much more by doing those things than you could possibly ever imagine. Then, allow the magical force of the world to easily, effortlessly, bring your biggest dreams to you!