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PE.550 Designing Your Life
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Lecture/Discussion 3: Acting on Your Plan and What's Next

- Don't wait until you "get" yourself before you enter into a relationship
 - "Getting" yourself is a life-long journey. Do it while you investigate relationships.
 - You learn a lot about yourself by being in a relationship.
 - Unless you are someone who needs to learn how to be alone.

Feedback on homework

- *Person 1*: It's overwhelming to think about changing 19 things tomorrow.
 - *Lauren's response*: Take yourself off automatic and on to manual.
 - The 19 areas of your life are always happening, whether you attend to them or not.
 - Choose which ones you want to work on first.
- *Person 2*: This has been amazing. I am getting up early now and getting my exercise in. I never knew I could write so much. I remember so much in my life, and it makes me look forward to turning 50 with such a better outlook on things. I share this with my son, and it's really been valuable for him.
 - *Lauren's response*: The less you are an authoritarian figure, and the more you are a regular human being the more your children don't have to lie to you.
 - *Person 2*: I asked my son to tell me the things I do that he doesn't like. He said yelling. So now I'm paying him \$5 every time I yell.
- *Person 3*: It was great to tell my secret.
 - *Lauren's response*: Hiding is harder than telling the truth.
 - Bliss is bravery and conquering fears.
- *Person 4*: I was afraid of skiing, and learned how to ski this year. It felt so great.
- *Person 5*: I experienced awkwardness when telling my confession to my friends. They didn't seem to care, and it was overall a bad experience.
 - *Lauren's response*: Two things:
 - Are you telling right people?
 - E.g. Telling your boss about your sex life.
 - Are you picking the right friends?
 - You don't want to always dwell on the mediocrity of your friends.
 - You want to LIVE with your friends, and BE with your friends.
 - Find friends that make it easier to be the latter with.
 - What she just did was turn the participant's experience from negative to positive, from shallow to deep.
 - She was dwelling in the hurt and the awkwardness, and the lesson she would take from this episode is: don't REALLY talk to your friends!
 - This only leads to unhappiness.
 - Instead, use this experience to work toward happiness and fulfilling relationships.
- We are in an elite position that we can spend time worrying about happiness. Like telling someone from Sudan that you are a vegan.

- *Person 6*: My family has a heritable disease. My siblings and I have a 50% chance if getting it. I know that I don't have it, and look at my two siblings, waiting for them to drop.
 - *Lauren's response*: Work toward them not having it.
 - *Person 6*: There was a time where I promised God that I would give up all sorts of things if only he would spare my siblings.
 - *Lauren's response*: Example of a veteran who saw his friends die. He made a promise with God that if he survived, we would do XYZ. And yet when he met with Lauren, he hadn't done it.
 - Her response: DO IT! Make good on your promises.
 - Do you really want your life to dwell in mediocrity?
 - You don't know how everything works, so don't *assume that it doesn't matter*.
- *Person 7*: Didn't tell the confession, because he was worried how it would hurt the receiver.
 - *Lauren's response*: You need to ask the receiver if they want to receive. They may not, and you need to respect that.
- *Person 8*: Told his fraternity brothers that he had lied to them about his sexual escapades. The people were inspired and wondered what they were lying about in their lives.
 - *Lauren's response*: It gets easier to tell the more you do it and the less you are hiding.
- *Person 9*: Told someone who was like "that's no big deal. Have you really been holding on to that for all this time?"
 - *Lauren's response*: Telling the truth is an amazing confidence-booster.
 - The longer you hide something, the more substantial it becomes.
 - Everyone has a bag of secrets as big as yours.
 - We just need to pop the bubble and start talking about it.
- *Person 10*: Confessing porn, and masturbating to fiancé. It opened up our relationship so much.
 - *Lauren's response*: It all starts with how willing you are to be yourself.
 - There are some things that Lauren confessed that left people outraged, and at night Lauren would lay in bed and think "oh my gosh, will anyone ever speak to me again?" And some didn't, and Lauren was fine.
 - You are honoring the people you wronged by giving them the chance to know the truth and respond.
 - You already screwed up the relationship with what you did before. Might as well be honest about it.
 - Sometimes, the only good feeling that you can expect to come of a confession is that you feel good about having gotten stuff off your chest.
 - Take your hits if you deserve them.
- *Person 11*: I cheated with my friend's girlfriend.
 - *Lauren's response*: You should tell him because you should honor your friend's right to the truth. He would want to know, and your friendship is just a façade now anyways. So if you're not going to tell him, get out of the friendship.
 - *Question from the audience*: Should you tell the girlfriend or not?
 - *Lauren's response*: That is not important. The guy is deciding how much he wants to clean up the sliminess in his relationship. The sliminess results from his lying to himself and being disloyal to his friend. Not about the girl at all.

- *Question from the audience:* So are you saying that this guy's friend needs to learn a lesson, and that him being truthful allows the friend to learn the lesson?
 - *Lauren's response:* Lessons keep repeating themselves until we are ready to learn them.
- *Question from the audience:* But shouldn't you consult the other person who did the cheating? Because that is going to get her in trouble, too?
 - *Lauren's response:* Do you really want to protect a liar? The chips will fall, and the world is a better place when they do. If you protect a lie, you can't BE with your real self.
- A good criterion for doing what you are about to do is to ask yourself: If everyone knew what I am about to do, would I still do it?
 - Lies give us amazing license to do some awful stuff.

Grace and Wisdom

- There's a balance in every communication: Grace vs. Wisdom
 - Example: "Please pass the water"
 - The giving of the water is the Wisdom.
 - The way it is phrased is Grace.
- Do you have too much grace or wisdom?
 - Make sure the person knows what you are about to say, and that you have their permission to proceed.
 - Ask yourself: what is the point that I am trying to make?
 - Frame the wisdom with grace.
- Resources to learn how to be more graceful.
 - Practice. Learn it in your own voice.
 - No matter how much of the "how to" you get, the actual speaking has to be you.
- If someone is defending himself or herself, then you accused someone of something.
 - Alternate route: tell someone about your feelings. "This is how it was for me." "I don't know if it's true, but this is how I perceived it. How did you perceive it?"
 - Most of the things we live with are all perception. It's all relative. Two opinions can coexist.
 - "Agree to disagree" can be taken two ways.
 - Bad way: She can feel X, but I will look down on her for that.
 - Good way: I accept that her perception is just as valid as mine, and respect that. One is not better than the other.
- *Question from the audience:* What about when you need to agree as a team to do something?
 - *Lauren's response:* Bodegas. Each person has their realm
 - Lauren's husband manages the money. He is the chairman.
 - Lauren has the final say in cleanliness.
 - Each person has a final say in an area.

A few final words as we embark on the journey

- Name your beast.
 - E.g. Lauren tells her husband: Call me steamroller if I am like this.
 - E.g. Someone is a doe-eyed determined woman
 - She is going for what she wants ruthlessly, but she is doing it looking really nice.
- Gradient
 - Start gradually

- Don't run a marathon tomorrow. You are capable of it, maybe, but you're still you.
- Make a promise that appreciates that you're a criminal. Start small. Otherwise, you will crash and burn.
- Don't make promises alone. Even Lauren can't do it. Make promises to someone else who will hold you accountable.
- Make sure that everything connects
 - Parents
 - Confessions
 - Areas of life
 - Promises
- You asked for a blueprint of your life from your parents. It's your mission to evolve it.
 - Dare yourself to love the mess.
- Realize that there are missing chunks of information in your version of the story. You are relying on a 10-year-old (the age you were at the time of the incident) to tell you how things were.
 - Example: Woman who had believed that her father was a rapist in jail. Found out that her mother had been lying to her. Her mom had stolen her away from her dad. Finding the truth made her so happy because she can now have a relationship with him.
 - What are your undiscovered stories?
- Become a journalist about your past and your family's past.
 - "How was I as a kid?"
 - Ask everyone.
 - Ask your sister, mother, father, grandfather.
 - It's profound that you are trying to uncover.
 - To love someone is to want to get to know them.
- Either you can embrace your tree, or fight it.
- Example of things in life weaving together
 - Abuse as a child
 - Depression, weight gain, and loss of sex drive later in life.
- Any Questions?
- *Question from the audience:* Is anonymous confession ok?
 - *Lauren's response:* Anything's better than nothing. It will move you toward "why are you so dark anyway"?
- *Question from the audience:* Should you confess everything to everyone, or only the people you have strong relationships with?
 - *Lauren's response:* It depends what type of life you want.
 - Tell everything, and then you will never again feel the need to hide anything.
 - Exception: when someone is not well (unhappy, miserable), be nice to him or her.
- *Question from the audience:* Do you have cases where this method failed? What are the caveats?
 - *Lauren's response:* She once had a huge contract with a new company. There were three dudes, with a pharaoh. Sleaziest guys she had ever met.
 - She gave back the money.
 - An integrity bomb went off, and the company is dealing with the consequences.
 - The Handel Method is not for everyone. For example, people have already left the room over the course of the past three days.
- *Question from the audience:* What about people who are truly dishonest and evil?

- *Lauren's response*: She doesn't call people evil. Just helps them clean up.
 - Stop hating the world.
 - Ask yourself why you are hanging out with these people
 - You hang with your crew.
- *Question from the audience*: After I told my wife my confessions, she started nagging.
 - *Lauren's response*: Don't call her a nagger. You are lying about her feelings, and treating her as an object.
 - If you really need time off, ask for it with integrity.
- *Question from the audience*: How do I find consequences for my promises?
 - *Lauren's response*: Find what works for you.
 - It's amazing how your mind manipulates the rules you've set.
- *Question from the audience*: How do you get someone to open up even once you have opened up to them?
 - *Lauren's response*: You can't make someone be intimate. You should ask yourself why you want that person to be intimate with you. Why are you going after them?
 - Why won't they open up?
 - Having a relationship is not neat and clean all the time.
 - It's all about going at it again and again. Apologies, misunderstandings, discussions.
 - Love is not easy.