Roles and Goals

ROLES & GOALS

Holiday seasons and the first quarter of every year sees an increase of people signing up for gyms, seeking therapy for self-growth and healing, booking annual checkups, and postponed medical procedures, sign up on dating apps, etc. As the year goes on, these year-beginning aspirations drop; and the rest of the year would either be a monotone of following old habits or regretting that we lack motivation to follow through to live the life that we desire. The main reason for this is that there are many layers involved in what sparks and keep our motivations as humans. We tend to often get motivated by a spark and then don't quite know how to fuel it to get to the finish line.

I have studied human behavior models in depth, worked with individuals and couples across 40 countries for more than 2 decades and helped Fortune 500 companies and governments' leaders come up with policies, strategies and plans that would get them to the outcome they desire. It is my pleasure to give you the core concepts of it all in a few pages here so you can also plan for a new year, which starts intentionally and strong and ends with a sense of fulfillment and thriving versus just surviving or sustaining.

We are usually encouraged to think about what we want and put action items behind them to achieve them, right? To me, this is like showing a person how to offer a firm handshake without helping them address their sweaty hands which might be the main cause that they are avoiding the firm handshake to begin with.

In this exercise, we will go through your roles (current and aspired), expectations surrounding them, your intention for each of them and the resources needed to get you from where you are to your desired stage by the end of next year. I ask all my clients to do this on annual basis, so we don't leave too much to chances. Although we cannot predict what is in the store for us 100% (as proven by the pandemic) but we could insert our intention and have a sense of agency around creating the life we desire.

I hope you are motivated enough to give this a try. Here is how you do it:

- Take a piece of paper or open a Word Document.
- On the left side create a column of all the roles that you currently have
- Then all the way to the right side of the page, create another column. In that column write down all the roles again (which you wish to keep by the end next year)
- Make blank spaces in front of the ones that you want to drop in the new year!
- Also add all the roles that you don't have but would like to have in your life by the end of next year.
- Now looking at the right column that you just created, go over every role and for every one of these roles, you're going to have one intention in mind. What it means is that for example, if you have a role as a mother and you would like the goal for that role to be something like, "I would like to create a more meaningful bond with my child" that would be the overarching intention/goal for that role. Or if you are contemplating an uncoupling with your partner, then that is the intention for that role.

- The next step after clarifying your intention/goal for each role is to work backward and put action items towards that goal. For some you need to have actions in every given week, for others you might need actions that are fulfilled on every quarter of the year (every 3 months), every 6 months and so on. Therefore, the increments that you are putting down for each role and the timing for inserting an action item could be different. For example, to create a more meaningful bond with your child, you might want to pick them up from school 3 times a week or be present for their night routine or have dinner together every night while to sustain a connection with a business connection, a message through LinkedIn every 6 month would suffice, or if you are looking to uncouple from your partner, one week you might want to put your resources together, one week you might have a goal of finding a counselor to help you through the process, one week you might want to reach out to close family and friends and let them know where your coupledom is, etc.
- Now looking at all the action items created, you want to also think about the time, resources, energy, money, etc. that you need to make each action to happen (making it as realistic as possible).
- Then, look into each role and think about the expectations surrounding it:
  - Expectations that you have of yourself in that role (for example, one should be in a healthy relationship, one should have a closer bond with their child, etc.).
  - Then think about the expectation that the person involved in that role might have (you might make assumption about this or actually have had a conversation with the person about what they need from you in that role). For example, your child might have complained that they don't see you as often that they wish, or your partner is expecting that you would be someone for them that you are not or be more communicative or have more frequent sex with them, etc.
  - On the 3rd level, think about your larger circle and see if you could recognize their voices in the mix. For example, "a good mother is…", "a healthy relationship is…", "a person who decouples is…". And get to know other people's expectations and judgements around these roles. This recognition will help you clarify whose voice you are listening to, so you could proceed with a sense of agency and awareness rather than just going with the flow and at the end of the day fulfilling others' expectations without knowing if they are actually meaningful to you, matter or get you the outcome that you desire.

For practice, write a couple of roles and your goals for those roles here:

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Then write down all the resources including time, money, energy, and human resources that you need for that to happen.

Write here for practice:

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Expectations that you have from yourself in these roles:

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Expectations that the actual person in that role has from you:

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Expectations that other people have from you or someone in this role:

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