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Living On Purpose

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Dedication to Laura Whitworth

3rd ANNUAL COACH TRAINING ROUNDUP

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By Laura Berman Fortgang, MCC

There's No Business Like Show Business

How having a purpose saved my life

There was a time not long ago when I had reached the pinnacle of any self-help author's career — being on the Oprah show. It was heady, it was wonderful, it kicked butt. And it almost killed me. The part that most people don't know is that I've been in discussions with the show several times over the years since and, for one reason or another, I have not been back on. Talk about a tease!

About nine months after the program aired my well-being was starting to depend on whether or not I was going to be back on the show. That was very ugly. I had forgotten who I was. I was not set into the throes of depression, but I certainly forgot how to be at peace. This affected how I felt about myself, my

because every day I would go back for more and more rejection and humiliation, only to be thrown a bone that would keep me happy long enough to forget the pain. I called it living for the reward of the stage and enduring the hell that it took to get there.

Remembering this scared me and made me conscious of the fact that I was allowing the approval of the show to color my life. I was having an abusive relationship with the Oprah show! It had to stop.

It was then that I recognized that I was off-purpose. I had been living as if my very being depended on being on the show again. I forgot that my purpose is to raise con-



“I was having an abusive relationship with the Oprah show!”

child, my husband, everything. It made me moody and prone to compare everything else to the promise of being back on Oprah.

One day I woke up and realized that I had repeated a pattern from my past. Being an actor (my last career) was a lot like what I had been going through. I used to call my acting career my abusive relationship

consciousness — to be the energy that naturally causes change. That's the very core of who I am and I had stopped living that because I was distracted by a goal. Yes, the show would be an amazing outlet for that purpose, but not if I stopped living life to get there.

This recognition prompted instant peace and a release of fear. It meant I

could succeed every day if I just stayed on purpose. I only had to remember to be me, fully, and the rest would take care of itself. And when I look back at what took me from acting to coaching it was the same purpose.

I wanted to impact change from the stage — to have people watch a play and be moved to change something in their life. I realized I did not have to wait for someone to hire me (or like me) to make that happen. So I left.

Today, opportunities come and go. Many I say no to because I know what my criteria are: Does this opportunity allow me to live from purpose? And, more importantly, what do I have to give up to do it? I am no longer willing to give up my happiness for a goal. My happiness is my life. Living my purpose fuels my happiness. •

*Laura Berman Fortgang, MCC, is a celebrated author. Her most recent book is *Now What? 90 Days to a New Life Direction*. She is also the creator of the *Now What?™ Coaching System for career clarity*.*