

A heart-shaped sun is positioned in the upper center of the image, glowing with a bright yellow and white light. The background is a gradient of orange and red, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Below the sun, the dark surface of the ocean is visible, with a shimmering path of light reflecting the sun's glow down the center. The overall mood is serene and inspirational.

**Living a Courageously
Authentic Life**

**Lesson Six:
Tap Into Your Own Personal
Power**

Lesson 6: Tap Into Your Own Personal Power

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

~Alice Walker

I had a conversation recently with a long-time friend and former colleague who wanted to understand how I was able to make the life changes that I did. He thought it was very inspiring and not something that many people would do.

I thought about our conversation for some time after we hung up. While making the decision to quit my “day job” and move temporarily to Guatemala was not the easiest decision to make, I hadn’t considered that it would be seen as courageous or inspiring. Sure, it may take some trust and a leap of faith, but courageous and inspiring? What is courageous about following your heart?

Then I remembered a quote from Nelson Mandela:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

This could be the reason why so many people don’t follow their heart. We are afraid of our own personal power and what it requires. It is far easier to give our power away to another person or a situation than it is to be fully responsible for our lives – our actions, our mistakes, our successes and failures, our words and our interactions with others. **Claiming and living in our individual personal power requires complete accountability to ourselves.** We cannot blame our family and friends, our employer, the government, our religion or race or gender or sexual orientation for a less-than-ideal life that doesn’t bring us joy.

It's not enough to know what your heart wants for your life.

You need to start living it. The key is to overcome your fears and excuses and look for ways to start living an authentic, heart-based, purposeful life today. As you do so, you'll discover that opportunities open up for you.

Inside of you is an incredible amount of untapped strength, perseverance and, quite frankly, magic to make your heart vision a reality. Our power is what gives us the courage to try, to take a first step toward our dreams. It is what helps us ignore those people who say it can't be done, and drives us to prove them wrong. Our power helps us when we are going through a difficult time and allows us to keep looking forward in spite of a setback we have just experienced.

When we step fully into our own personal power, we are stepping into our connection with our soul, Source and love. We see that we are limitless in our power and that there is more than enough power to go around for everyone. When we tap into our personal power we actually move away from ego, which has an inflated and inaccurate sense of where true power comes from. We do not look to take power away from others because we recognize the inherent strength in each other when we are filled with our own power.

From our place of personal power, we are then free to make the decisions that help us align more with our life purpose. We become a beacon for others who are looking to tap into their own personal power, and then can serve as a guide to help them find their own power and live joyfully with it, without our own personal judgments, expectations, or point-of-view getting in the way.

Most people have felt what it is like to tap into this power. We've had those moments in our lives when we felt like we were "in the groove" and "unstoppable."

The incredible thing is that we can tap into this power anytime we want to – not just when we are facing a difficult situation or need to accomplish something quickly. And that is the key to living a courageously authentic, purposeful life:

We have the power and capability within us and simply have to trust that we can do it.

One last thought: personal power can bring about incredible changes in your life and the lives of others. You begin acting on your ideas and intuition because you are confident in yourself and your abilities. However, don't be surprised if some deep-rooted fears start to surface. These fears most likely have been with you a long time, and they think that it is their job to keep you "safe." Sometimes these fears can feel debilitating. Spend some time to get to know these fears and determine if they are a valid fear (a situation where you are in imminent danger of being physically hurt, for example) or a manufactured or irrational fear (such as the fear that if you are

successful everyone is going to reject you). Work to release the manufactured or irrational fears (there are examples on how to do this in the action section) and continue moving forward. And if you do give into a fear, please don't berate yourself or give up. Be gentle with yourself, work through the fear, shake of the dirt and start moving forward again.

Case story: Tapping Into My Personal Power

Years ago, I resolved on New Year's Day that I was going to sell my house in Connecticut and move to San Francisco, California. My heart was calling out for a change, and moving just felt right to me. So on New Year's Day, I vowed to make it happen...even though I had no idea how I was going to go about it.

With that vow, I tapped into my personal power, and things began unfolding and coming together in ways that I couldn't have imagined. I went into work the next day and announced that I was selling my house. One of my coworkers immediately said that she would buy it (she had attended a holiday party I had held a couple weeks prior). We talked for about 10 minutes about price, agreed on one, and, then, just like that, my house was sold. She wanted to move in quickly, so about a month later I took a flight to San Francisco to find a place to live.

San Francisco is notoriously difficult to find housing in, and I wanted to find an apartment that would take my dog and cat AND have secure parking for my car AND meet my budget. Everyone told me I would never find anything that met my needs. I ignored them and held a vision in my heart on the type of apartment I wanted. I didn't find one - I found three and chose the one I liked the best. By April, I was living in San Francisco and thoroughly enjoying my life there.

Case story: Overcoming Fear

As I was making some of my major life changes in the past couple years, I battled some deep-rooted fears. Most recently, I started to feel very anxious and fearful about moving my belongings to Guatemala. I had several nights where I wasn't able to sleep because of the fear.

Deep down, I knew that building a house in Guatemala was the absolute right thing for me to do, and was aligned with my life vision. I also knew that filling the house with belongings that I loved was critical for me to have the peaceful sanctuary that I wanted for recharging and relaxation.

But at one point I actually considered walking away from it all. It was at that point that I realized that for me to truly continue to grow, evolve and live my life

courageously, I had to address this fear. I knew that if I didn't, the fear would keep coming up and would potentially sabotage my life going forward.

I spent some time with the fear, really immersing myself in it, so that I could define and understand it. I realized that my fear was an irrational one: I was afraid that if I failed at my vision that I would end up alone and homeless. Once I was able to name the fear, I was then able to address it and come up with solutions to prove to myself that this fear was, in fact, unfounded. Some of the items on my list were that I could always do some consulting work, I could move in with family or friends, or I could rack up my credit cards to pay for things (probably not the best solution, but hey, I was brainstorming!). The list of solutions negated the actual fear at a logical, mental level. I went back through my life and showed myself the many times that I proved to myself that I could make major changes in my life and be successful and supported in the process (such as when I was looking for a home in San Francisco). I also spent time visualizing myself in the house, happy, with all of my beautiful things with me.

The process helped me immensely and I went forward with the move.

While this particular fear of mine has diminished, it is not completely gone. Because it is so deeply rooted and has been with me since I was a child, it is still there. It takes time to release it. But the really great thing is that now, when that fear pops up, I can say to myself, "Hello old fear. I recognize you. And I know that you are not valid." I remind myself of all the options I have. I've noticed is that the fear doesn't come up as often, and when it does, it doesn't have the same power over me and doesn't stay around nearly as long.

Taking Action

Set aside a couple hours (all at once or in smaller time blocks) and find a quiet place to respond to the following questions.

- 1) Practice tapping into your personal power. It's a good idea to practice at this until it becomes almost automatic for you. That way, when you are facing a personal challenge, situation or crisis, you will be able to quickly stop, access your personal power, and then move forward from a place of confidence and inner wisdom.
 - a) Be still and present: by quieting the mind and focusing on the "now," you give space for your personal power to be felt in your body. For me, it lives in and begins from several areas – my sacral area, my heart, and my third eye. When I am still and present, I can feel it expanding out from these areas in all directions until I am engulfed by it.

- b) Breathe: focus on your breath, bringing it deep down into the sacral area of your body. Let your breath be slow, deliberate and expansive. Do this for five minutes or so. Feel it building and creating a fire within your sacral area...and fanning that fire until it becomes large enough for you to then move the fire (your personal power) up and throughout your body with your breath.
 - c) Visualize yourself in a place of power: for me, this is one of the Mayan ruins that I explored in the Yucatan. I could feel the power energy of the site when I was there, and I created a permanent energetic link for myself to that site. Whenever I want or need to, I visualize the Mayan ruin, mentally transport myself there, and breathe in the power of the site into my body to help me connect with my personal power.
 - d) Ask your power animal to give you power: your power animal can help “amp up” your personal power level. All you need to do is ask him or her to do so. My power animal will place his paws on my shoulders and transfer power over to me. I can feel it coursing through my body when he does this.
 - e) Fake it until you make it: if you’re struggling with feeling your personal power through the suggestions above, you may have some limiting beliefs that are holding you back. In this case, you may want to develop a power mantra, chant or vision board that will help you focus on feeling as if you are in your power until you eventually are able to actually tap into and feel your personal power.
- 2) Take a closer look at the vision you created in Lesson 5. Answer each question about each item on it. Be as specific as possible!
- a) For physical items, what are the make, model, and cost of each?
 - b) What do you need to do to accomplish this item?
 - c) What steps do you need to take?
 - d) What relationships do you need to cultivate?
 - e) Who can help you?
 - f) What training or education do you need?
 - g) Does achieving this item rely on any other items in your vision?
 - h) Are there any other aspects of this item that you need to take into consideration as you manifest this vision?
 - i) Develop a list of high-level “to-do” items for each item.
- 3) Which items are your top priorities? For each, answer the following questions
- a) What is one step you can take today?
 - b) What are three steps you can take this week?
 - c) What steps can you commit to this month? In the next three months? Six months? One year?

- d) At the end of each time period, what do you commit to having accomplished? Remember, we cannot create everything in one day, but we can make progress each day toward our vision.
- 4) Build out a mini action plan with each action clearly listed. Place it where you can see it and check off your accomplishments.
- 5) Spend time daily with your vision and your action plan, seeing and feeling the life you are creating. Review and update your action plan as needed. While you have a defined list of actions, be flexible and open. Some things may take more time than anticipated. Other opportunities may come to you that you never expected but align beautifully with your vision.
- 6) As you begin taking action, it is completely normal to have some fears come up. When this happens, spend time with the fear. Really get to know it. Name it. This fear is going to do everything it can to hold you back. Your job, when a fear arises is to recognize it, identify at least 5-6 ways that you can negate that fear, and keep reminding yourself of those reasons. Over time, the fear will diminish and have less of a hold on you.

Congratulations on completing Lesson 6! What special thing can you do for yourself to honor and reward yourself for the work you've done?