

CHAPTER 29

You 2.0

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“Your life can end at any time, and it can end more than once. But it can also begin more than once.”

—MICHAEL R. FRENCH

Do you believe in reincarnation?" asked Marcia.
"What?" I replied, stunned.

"Yes, reincarnation," exclaimed Marcia, looking at me curiously. "Do you think when we die, we'll keep coming back to another body to live more lives?"

"Huh?" I paused. "Very deep. You woke up philosophical today, huh?" I asked as I kept looking through the menu. "I have never met anyone who was reincarnated. So dolly, I don't know."

"Hmm, true," she said softly. "Don't you find the thought at least comforting though?"

"Comforting? What could be comforting about it?" I asked.

"Thinking that if you fail to do it right in this life, you can have a do-over and make things right in another life," she responded, looking up and then away.

"Another life!" I snorted. "Count me out of your next life's plans," I replied, rather mockingly.

"I'm being serious," she insisted.

"Okay!" I said. "We have this one life. One! But it doesn't mean that we have to live it only one way. We can live in so many different chapters."

"And, you know what?" I asked as I reached out for her hands. "The beauty of life is that we can always change direction. We get the chance to change, grow and evolve time and time again."

TO LIVE IS TO EVOLVE

At times, professionally and personally, we feel like we're on hamster wheel and just can't get off it. We are restless and no longer satisfied with where we are. As Heraclitus said, change is the only constant thing in life. Life is about cycles, and with all the rapid changes happening around us, we need to be able to adapt, grow and evolve if we want to reach our full potential. But with our hamster wheels spinning around so fast, it can be easy not to recognize when it's time for change. Do you identify with any of these statements?

- You find that you really need to pump yourself up to do anything.
- You often catch yourself daydreaming.
- You are envious of others and wish you were them.
- You feel unfulfilled and disconnected from your goals and dreams.
- You get excited at the thought of doing something completely different.

If this resonates with you, it might be time to reinvent yourself.

THE NEED FOR SELF-REINVENTION

To reinvent oneself is to “produce something new that is based on something that already exists.” The concept of reinvention sounds terrifying and wrongly assumes that it requires a complete overhaul: throwing out who we are, all that we have done and adopting a new personality and starting all over again. But it doesn't have to be so drastic and dramatic. I like to compare the concept of reinvention to computer software that needs to be regularly updated. In this process,

the existing software on the device is not replaced, it's merely fine-tuned by removing outdated features. Ultimately, the updates are meant to make the software perform more reliably and faster.

Reinventing yourself goes beyond the superficial aspects of your life. You know, the part everyone sees: the hair, the weight, the outfits, etc. It doesn't stop at changing your looks, moving to a new place, switching jobs and appearing different. If anything, self-reinvention is more about staying true to who you really are. It's about total alignment with your values and using your past experiences as stepping stones to evolve into the best version of yourself. You are reinventing yourself when you decide to change your old ways and forge a new path by exploring novel opportunities and possibilities. You know you're ready for self-reinvention when you feel:

Disconnected from your goals

Sometimes instead of living, we let life pass us by. One day we wake up and realize we're far from where we're meant to be. If you feel like your life has taken a detour, it's time to bring it into alignment.

Uninspired and listless

You don't feel any joy in what you're doing and you imagine yourself being somewhere else, doing something different. You're probably also burnt out from taking on so much, with your mental and physical well-being out of sync.

A lack of growth

Growth is an essential part of our learning and development. If you feel bored, stuck and no longer excited about the path you're on, then it's time to take yourself out of your comfort zone.

THE PATH TO SELF-REINVENTION

Life may throw circumstances at you that push you towards reinvention. Or you may have simply decided that you need to get off your hamster wheel and initiate the transformation yourself. I've had to reinvent myself a couple of times already, and what really made the difference was taking small steps to create a shift forward. This ultimately brought my dreams and goals into alignment. Your circumstances will be different, of course, and you may have no choice but to take drastic decisions to create fulfillment and purpose in your life.

Whatever the case, know that there's no right or perfect way to go about reinventing yourself. As much as we want instant solutions to our problems, reinventing oneself is not an overnight solution. You might be tempted to take drastic steps and rush towards making life-changing decisions. But once the adrenaline fueled by your desire for change wears off, you'll be back at your starting point. Self-reinvention requires small, consistent steps. That's where you'll be able to attain sustainable progress.

While self-reinvention can be daunting, here are a few pointers to help you get started on this journey.

| IN ACTION: REINVENTING YOURSELF | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Instead of: | Consider this: |
| Rushing to get started. | Observe and introspect. Don't rush things. This is the time for introspection and self-awareness. You have to know why you desire to reinvent yourself. What is it that you need to change? |
| Being stuck with what you know. | Embrace learning. Some habits are keeping you from living the life you are meant to live. Start building new habits and acquiring new skills. |
| Living a life you don't want. | Listen to yourself. Know your vision. Where are you now and where do you want to be? See the chapter on finding your why. |
| Running toward change blindly. | Build a plan of action. Turn your vision into goals. See the chapter on goals to help you develop smart goals. |

BETTER STORY

With

AVA DUVERNAY

How can you make a career switch from one industry to the next and dominate it? Is it possible to go from publicist to a world renowned director and producer? If “anything is possible” were a person, it would be Ava Duvernay.

Ava Duvernay’s bold reinvention from marketing and public relations expert to major movie director has been far from traditional. While Ava had always been in the movie industry as a publicist, she didn’t study at film school. In fact, she only started working behind a camera at the age of 32 and only made her first movie by age 35. In a world that is bent on telling us to rush everything, she is a reminder that one can start and re-start at any time if you have the passion, courage and grit to do so. For over a decade Ava excelled at PR and even created her own agency to help promote other people’s movies. And while it was clear that she had a passion for the film industry, she had no formal training in filmmaking. But she embarked on the transition from publicist to filmmaker at her own pace, gradually but strategically.

Duvernay did it all by banking on herself: she followed her passion and invested her own money in producing her first three movies, all while still holding down her job as a publicist. Her path clearly shows that it’s never too late to change course, and that success happens when you take baby steps. Taking focused steps has helped cement Ava Duvernay’s reputation as one of the most influential and respected film directors in the industry today. And if she could do it, there’s no reason why you can’t either!

A BETTER YOU

In Action

THE REINVENTION WHEEL

Reinventing yourself is not all black and white. Finding out if you need professional or personal reinvention will come from a combination of things. But you can't reinvent what you don't know. By now, you have built self-awareness and you have defined what it is that you want to accomplish. If you haven't, I recommend you do so by revisiting the chapters on goals and defining your vision first.

For today's exercise, we are going to build on a concept called the six dimensions of wellness model which was developed by Dr. Bill Helder.

- There are six categories in the wheel: emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and occupational (work, career, etc.).
- For each category, write down one thing that you currently enjoy doing and one thing you would like to start doing.

NEXT STEPS:

- If there's nothing positive you could write in a particular category, this is a red flag. It either means you have not invested enough in that category in your everyday life or whatever you are doing is not bringing you any joy, peace and happiness.
- For all the things you want to start doing: try to see if there's a pattern in what you have written down. Decide and put a deadline to how you can start doing more of these things.