



Hi Everyone!

Lately, I've been reflecting a lot on being a lifelong learner. The importance of it. How critical it is to feeling fulfilled. And, yes, how critical it is to our overall happiness. Perhaps this past year has prompted me to think about this as it relates to me now, to my younger self, and to others who I know and think about.

An email landed in my inbox last week...

A CEO of a fairly large company who I'd never met before reached out to me. Out of the blue. She had just read [my book](#) and so kindly reached out to compliment me on it. She described to me how she had believed that she had missed an opportunity for herself – of figuring out what she really wanted to do. And going out and doing it. Doing something that really mattered to her. Then she went on to explain how when you don't know something, especially after you've been at the top of your game for so long, it's a bit intimidating. This coming from someone who is not intimidated by running a public company but possibly fears the unknown. Fear of learning something new.

We don't often equate courage with learning, but in my experience, some of the most fearless acts come from admitting the things you don't know – and then setting out to fill those gaps with your own knowledge. If you embrace the idea of being a lifelong learner, that attitude will also unlock the expertise of your peers and colleagues. And it will not only drive your success, but will expand your horizons.

Anyone who knows me, knows that I love learning. I'm constantly reading, always asking questions, regularly seeking out new skills and ideas. But it also takes practice. Each day, I try to go out into the world and do something new. Try something outside of my comfort zone. Figure out something I haven't mastered. Something that I find interesting and that I am curious about. That can be work-related, a class, or a workshop. Or it could even be taking on a new hobby. Learning a new discipline.

“ We don't often equate courage with learning, but in my experience, some of the most fearless acts come from admitting the things you don't know – and then setting out to fill those gaps.

For me, one of the most challenging and rewarding things I did over the past few years was write [my book](#). Something I had no expertise doing, but I decided to do it anyway. Maybe I worried about making mistakes at times, but I was confident that I could keep moving forward, figure out the difficult parts, and learn a lot. And boy did I learn! So much about what it takes to publish a book and navigate the process. And in addition to learning, I look back now and feel proud that I got through what at points seemed like a black hole.

But why do so many push learning to the backburner??

Especially as they progress forward in their careers? I see it repeatedly – with employees, with friends, even with CEOs who reach the top of their field. And interestingly enough, these are the same people who often find their jobs to be less than fulfilling.

At some point in our career journey, we become Managers, then Directors or VPs or even CEOs. Our job responsibilities expand, and we start mentoring and managing people. Often our roles are consumed by these duties for others, and unfortunately we don't prioritize our own learning. Knowing how to learn and then possessing the drive to actually do it is really the key.

But a larger dynamic is also at play here. If we don't take the time to learn, no matter where we are at in our career, we often become frustrated. Maybe less relevant in our position too. I often think about the fact that children – often our own – are encouraged to be inquisitive and ask a lot of questions. New employees are encouraged to be inquisitive and ask a lot of questions too. Yet the higher they go in their career, the less they ask questions. Often. And the less they seek information to learn. In fact, asking questions is often held against them. Why is it that we don't value that inquisitiveness?

“ As adults, we lose permission to be curious – and be able to seek out challenges at work and even in our own lives.

I don't believe it's because we as humans become less curious. I believe it's that we lose permission, in many cases, to be curious. And be able to seek challenges – at work and even in our own lives. Perhaps we never really think about how being a lifelong learner can broaden our perspective.

Here's the thing though: I sense that there's a shift happening. Maybe it's because of the events of this past year. Maybe it's because people are discovering all the resources out there now for gaining knowledge and new skills. Or maybe it's because people are realizing that time is more valuable – why delay doing the thing they have always been curious about or wanted to do or know more about?

Here's where learning hit home for me

Back when I had the idea for my company, Hint, I took a bit of a different path. It started with me realizing that I wasn't as healthy as I wanted to be. Purely by accident, I decided to stop drinking diet soda – which was a huge addiction for me. I started reading food labels on my quest to get healthy, and I was suddenly freaked out once I understood what I had been drinking – for so many years! I swapped out my diet soda for plain water, begrudgingly, because plain water was boring. And then I started slicing fruit and putting that in water for taste. When I dropped over 20 pounds in two weeks, got my energy back, and cleared the acne I had developed, that's when I realized I was on to something.

It took me about a year of research looking for the reason why I was able to turn my health around, but it turned out to be those damn diet sweeteners that were causing havoc on my system. I had been fooled by healthy perception vs. healthy reality.

I was learning. Learning about something that interested me.

Then it hit me. Maybe others find water boring like I do? Maybe others are looking for a solution to make water taste better?

My curiosity was in full swing. Off to the grocery store I went on my learning expedition. That curious mind of mine had never had so much fun! Well, not in a while anyway.

“ When I felt fear, I pushed through.
When I worried about failure, I drove myself
to think about the possibility of success.
When I had doubters interrupting my stride,
I reminded myself that
I needed to try – sometimes harder.

Looking back at my time at my previous role at AOL prior to starting Hint, I remember it being fun and exhilarating – when we were in the “building” phase. The hockey stick. But as the company's growth began to level off, it wasn't as exciting. Naturally, I realized later that my curiosity had slowed down as well. I wasn't as excited about what I was doing any longer. The job had run its course for me. But until I found my new interest – health – I couldn't define it. Suddenly, I was invigorated. I was educating myself. I was asking questions. I was challenging myself.

Embrace the feeling of not having the answers

And that's what I have learned: not having the answers, not having the experience, becoming a student of a new industry – that was exciting! I allowed myself to be vulnerable. When I felt fear, I pushed through. When I worried about failure, I drove myself to think about the possibility of success. When I had doubters interrupting my stride, I reminded myself that I needed to try – sometimes harder. And with every move, I made certain that I was appreciating the cycle of learning.

Speaking of Learning

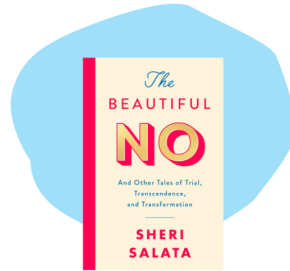
There's no better way to learn than reading from someone's personal experiences and hearing their story from their own POV. Some of my recent faves that you should definitely pick up if you haven't read:



"The Big Life" by Ann Shoket

As the former long-time editor of Seventeen Magazine and the current queen of the online community Badass Babes, Ann not only knows millennial women, but she's also aware of the obstacles that every woman faces in the workplace

on a daily basis. "The Big Life" is the definitive guidebook that maps out the road to success in today's business world.



"The Beautiful No" by Sheri Salata

Sheri spent twenty-one years working on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" right by the legendary host's side. But what happens when you realize you've had the career of your dreams, but you don't have the life of your dreams? Shari chose the unexpected path. And she transformed her life. It's a fascinating story.



"Unapologetically Ambitious" by Shellye Archambeau

Know your power. That's Shellye's advice. Throughout her incredible career Shellye has taken on risky roles, not because they promised a big financial upside, but because she wanted to test her leadership and strategic skills. And in success (and failure) she would come to know her power.



"Winging It" by Emma Isaacs

The subtitle of Emma's book says it all: why action beats planning every time. I love a "to do" list as much as anyone, but I try to keep mine short and manageable. Because otherwise – as "Winging It" warns – you end up doing too much thinking, and not enough doing. Amen!

Thanks for subscribing to my newsletter! Keep your comments coming. I love hearing all your suggestions and feedback. And keep challenging yourself and learning!

Kara

Kara

[Undaunted: Overcoming Doubts + Doubters](#)

Part autobiography, part business memoir, and lots of insights on building a successful and gratifying career. Hint Founder & CEO, Kara Goldin, takes us on a journey of determination, perseverance, and hope.



[click here to order](#)

hint

© Hint, Inc. | 2124 Union St. San Francisco, CA 94123 | All Rights Reserved

To unsubscribe from Undaunted emails or manage your communication preferences [click here](#).

To unsubscribe from all Hint communications [click here](#).