

Names are changed to honor client confidentiality

Don't Settle For Beige

“Be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love.” Rumi

Her life lacks color because of derailed dreams.

For as long as she can remember, Kelly was thoroughly captivated by the thought of becoming a chef. Excitement tackled her to the ground every time she thought about it, so buoyant was she over the prospect. But something regrettable happened to her once she turned 18. Her dream was replaced by something more socially expected. Instead of obeying her passion, she obeyed a programmed directive that said she should get married and have a family. And unfortunately for her, that's exactly what she did.

Since then, Kelly's life has been reduced to a series of compromises—and not surprisingly, she's a very unhappy woman today. Her life is marked with an undercurrent of sadness, grieving the life she failed to choose for herself. She lacks enthusiasm for her job, for her family—for life in general. Kelly's life is beige.

Everything Kelly does is motivated by what she believes she *should* do. It's no wonder she's unhappy; years ago she deserted her true self. Kelly's not alone. Many people spend their lives living a life they don't really want. They aren't where they want to be, doing what they want to do. Self-suppression results in a drab, colorless existence. Only when we live life in accordance with our purest and deepest desires, do our lives take on the colors of contentment.

Kelly doesn't regret getting married and having children. Her family is very dear to her. It's just that she compromised too much—too much of herself has been sacrificed on the altar of what she “should” do.

The wisdom of hindsight tells us that making herself happy should have been her first priority. Ideally, she would have pursued her career before taking on a family lifestyle. Or, she would have adjusted her life in such a way to include her dream. This possibility still exists. As a fulfilled person, Kelly would have far more to give to her family than she does in her current state of unhappiness.

The lesson for this woman—and for all of us—is to pay close attention to where our heart wants to take us. That gravitational pull isn't there just to be casually brushed aside as frivolous or childish. It is rooted in what is right for us.

I was once asked, “How do I discover my purpose?” I feel the answer lies in what excites us—where our passion lies. Why would the opposite make sense? I don't believe I should raise

buffalo or knit sweaters if the very thought leaves me cold and cheerless. For instance, if I'm passionate about building boats, I don't believe my purpose would be completely foreign to that, like becoming an accountant. Someone else would be better suited for a position for which I lack enthusiasm. It stands to reason that our purpose involves what we want to do, what we yearn for in every fiber of our being, not something dictated by the "shoulds" we've adopted.

So Kelly's passion is tied to wearing a chef's hat. Now, let's say she embarks on that career—even late in the game. As a person pursuing her dream, with a glow about her, won't she have more to offer the world? Every person she encounters will benefit from her lighter spirit. It's clearly a win-win situation. She benefits and so does the world. As it stands now, no one is benefitting.

When "shoulds" rule your life, resolve to end such enslavement abruptly. Get back into the driver's seat and rule your own life. Choose what is right for you instead of being clutched by blind obedience. Even a dull job can be fortified when you pursue nourishment from other sources. Enrich your life with those things that lift your spirit.

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