

Maya Angelou, to quote the famous author and amazing, amazing woman, "There's no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." I have read this quote so many times this past week and my family, we've experienced a series of tragedies in 2021, including the great loss of my mother-in-law. And it made me really think about, and look at the truth about loss. We've experienced loss in 2020 with businesses, the loss of lives from COVID, the loss of lives from social injustice and the loss of businesses closing down because of the pandemic, and not being able to continue after things happened. And I thought about all of this and realized that from these losses, especially as we are grieving the great loss of my amazing Irish mother-in-law, I mean, it happened so suddenly, and it's been so difficult, especially since we've had a series of other things that have happened this year so far.

And I thought about the truth really about loss because loss happens, and the thing is, is that we can choose how we respond to these losses. We can choose to stay completely immobilized by the losses that we've experienced, or we can choose to sit with the pain and then rise from it, and just treasure the most precious gift that we all have, which is the life that we have itself, right here, right now, and the amazing things that we're able to do with that life. And if I just take what I'm doing with the grieving process and what we're experiencing, my husband and I have had several conversations about this and the other things that we are dealing with at this time, and just thinking to ourselves, what is this showing us? And it's a really, really difficult question to ask yourself when you're in the middle of great sadness and pain and tragedy is, what is this showing us that we need to do?

And with the loss of my mother-in-law, for myself, it's pointed out to really think about what it is that I want from my life. And I ask myself this question a lot, and I ask it to my clients, but I've looked at it in a much different way now and really saying, what is it that I really want for my life? What do I want it to look like? What do I want to do? What do I want to experience? Because the truth is, is that it is the most precious gift that we have, is our life, our time here on this planet. And even looking at everything that we experienced in 2020, and my belief that all of these things, and even the loss of the normal, the norm that we were experiencing for so long, the loss of that, looking at that and saying, what did this enable us to do?

What did this enable us to do that maybe we wouldn't have done before if we hadn't experienced that loss of the normal? And the thing is, is that... And I did a call yesterday, I was asked to be a speaker on a panel next week for an event, for a virtual event. And we were having this conversation about the businesses that will rise up out of these tremendous losses that we've experienced, the businesses that will continue to keep going, are the businesses that are willing to dig deep, to try new things, to take this adversity and build innovation from it, to do things differently than they've done before, whether it's negotiating better deals or better terms with their vendors, or even having a smaller and more agile supply chain, so that should something happen, you don't completely lose your ability to continue your business.

So whether it's negotiating better deals with vendors or finding other new vendors, or doing things differently, potentially not using delivery services, if you're a restaurant using delivery services because of their high fees, but maybe figuring something different out for yourself, or if you are a manufacturer, again, not relying on one supplier who seems to have a monopoly on a particular product or part or industry, not relying on them and actually seeking out smaller, more agile vendors. And maybe that's what that looks like. But the truth of the matter is when we experienced great loss, it gives us the chance to really dig deep and find that story that you want to tell, that you've been afraid to tell, or find and really go after those things that you've always wanted to do, but maybe you were afraid.

And to really ask yourself that hard question of, "What is it that I really want in this most precious, amazing life that I've been given?" And again, we've experienced so many difficulties over the past year, and I know going into the beginning of this year it just continued with the protest at the Capitol, and the

storming of the Capitol, and everything that happened with that, and just feeling such sadness. But even a situation like that, one of the things that I realized is that there is more that actually unites us than divides us. And the more we can figure out what those things are that can unite us together, the more we can get through all of these tragedies and these losses that we've experienced, if we all dig deep and figure out what's important to us, and ask those questions of, what do we really want for our life?

I know for myself, asking myself that question in a much different way than I've asked before, maybe not the question itself, but looking at it and my answer, having it be so much different than before, that there are things that I've realized where I haven't stretched far enough, or I haven't pushed myself out of a comfort zone that I didn't even really realize that I had. And really asking, am I surrounding myself with people who support me, who want to make this world a better place, who want to impact lots of change? Are my husband and I doing the things that we really want to do?

I know for the longest time, I mean, since I've known him, both of us, when I was working in a small slash large business and he's been working in corporate, we were workaholics. I mean, and even when I first became an entrepreneur, I still worked really, really long hours and experienced burnout. And the thing is, is that, that's not really like... And for some people that might be how they want to live, but there are so many things that I've realized that I've missed out on and spent so much of my time and my life, that precious life, with anxiety and stress, and getting lost in what other people want and not asking myself really what it is that I want. And I've realized that, and how that had impacted me along the way, and really thinking to myself and asking, what is it that I want?

I mean, as I said, I've asked myself this question, I have my planning methods that I do to close out a previous year and launch a new year. But when you experienced great loss, it has you looking at things from a much different lens, and realizing where you've had that story inside of you, or you've had that thing inside of you that you've wanted to do, and you've held back from it, or that realization of where have I been hindering my own growth? And I think that when we experience great loss, it gives us a chance to learn a lesson or to find our own truth about what it is that we really want with this one beautiful, amazing, precious life.

So here's the thing, I wanted to talk about this, and I kind of did this episode on the fly. It's been a struggle to deal with the things that we've had to deal with since the beginning of the year, actually it started at the end of last year into the beginning of this year, it's been a struggle. And I know for myself and for my husband, we are so very grateful that we have each other, and that we have a core group of support with friends and family that we can count on. But I wanted to talk about this because, as I've said, there has been so much loss and changes and things that have happened. And I know a lot of people want to just focus on the loss itself and be angry or be frustrated, or be critical and only look for the negative.

And what I'm saying is, one of the things that I have learned, and I'm going to continue learning as we move through these tragedies that we've experienced right now and just moving through everything, what I have realized is that, again, when these things happen, it is a chance for us to look at things differently, to look at things differently, to look at things and say, "I can make this, what is it that I really want?" And to move from that place, to use that adversity to create innovation, to create something better. And I've realized that sometimes these things happen or these things come our way, not to make things worse for us, but to actually make things better if we choose to see them.

So I hope this helped you if you're dealing with the loss of a loved one, or maybe you've had a lot of struggles in your business, or maybe you've been battling anxiety or whatever it is, I wanted to do this episode to help, whether it's one person or a thousand people or whatever it is, that when we are given adversity, when we are given these things that change our life, we have a choice to find the lesson or use it to propel us and move us forward, and to really tap into what it is that we want with this life or we

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can choose to continue down a dark path, and be miserable, and really get wrapped up in the pain and let it continue to take us down.

So as we move through this year... And I do believe that this year is going to present so many amazing things. I mean, there are amazing things that have happened already, as I said, there is more that unites us than divides us. I believe that in my heart completely. So let's try and look for the silver lining or look for the light in the darkness, or look for what it is to dig deep and figure out what really fills our soul with joy. So until next week, have a great rest of your week. And remember, we are given this one amazing, beautiful life, so let's do something amazing with it.