

Preface

Brave to Lead Like A Girl.

In 2014, I was the Marketing Director for FemCare (Always, Tampax brands) at Procter & Gamble (P&G) and I was working with my global Marketing team to rework the equity of the brand. We were redesigning our feminine pad and wanted to create a marketing campaign that was more purpose-driven. After deep consumer insight work and realizing the impact an effective pad has on a girl's self-esteem, we aligned to shift our focus from the functional benefit of protection, to that of a higher-order life benefit – empowering women to be the best that they could be.

This equity reinvention led to a global brief that directed our advertising agency, Leo Burnett, to present to us a new campaign called, “#AlwaysLikeAGirl.” The campaign spoke to the fact that young girls saw ‘doing things like a girl’ to mean doing great things, but somehow around puberty, this becomes an **insult—the** campaign challenged this convention to make doing things ‘like a girl’ to mean doing great things, and further challenged consumers and society with: ‘Why can't running like a girl mean winning the race?’

I remember seeing it for the first time and my heart jumped; this was exactly what had made me get out of bed every day for the past 17 years. I showed it to my daughter, then 11 years old and she cried. But what is more **meaningful — three** years later—she called me from school all excited: “Mum you will not believe it, but they are showing your ad in social studies!”

This campaign went on to become the most viral advertisement of 2014: winner of 14 Cannes advertising awards; the first FemCare advertisement to ever be shown during the Super Bowl, an American football prime-time television sporting event, but more importantly — it started a movement for women empowerment pre-#MeToo.

I have decided to call this book ***Brave to Lead Like A Girl*** to pay homage to this game-changing and poignant campaign.

What does it mean to lead ‘like a girl’?

Leading like a girl is leading from the head AND the heart.

From an evolutionary POV, men were hunters (strong and bold) and women were gatherers (warm and nurturing). Our models of leadership today reflect much of this archaic view. Leaders are expected to be strong, bold, decisive, assertive, and somewhat impersonal, which has been associated with male behavior in the past.

This is a socially constructed, yet I argue old-fashioned stereotype, and it's becoming imminent we change this. Research has shown emotions and especially empathy is critical for psychological safety – which means “being able to show one’s self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status or career” (Kahn 1990, p708). In psychologically-safe teams, employee potential and team effectiveness are maximized. Empathy is also critical to understand resistance to change from employees and stake-holders, as well as for innovation through the ability to understand unexpressed consumer needs.

Research has shown that on average, women tend to score higher on most measurements of emotional intelligence, especially empathy. This is also proven in neuroscientific research showing a female brain tends to stay with the emotion expressed (empathize with it) while the male brain tends to sense the feeling for a moment but then tune out of the emotion and activate other parts of the brain associated with problem solving — hence the feeling by so many women that their man doesn't listen and jumps to fix a problem when all she wanted was empathy.

On top of these female versus male brain differences, we are also seeing a total ‘empathy crisis’ of the 25 to 30-year-old millennials in the workforce compared to 30 years ago. With digital transformation and kids having less face-to-face emotional interaction, this is not surprising.

This combination of the workplace becoming less empathetic and the tendency of workforces to mirror their manager’s behavior indicates this ‘female’ trait to be an important leadership skill of the future. Interestingly, further research among the top-performing managers finds no difference between men and women in regard to emotional intelligence indicating top performing leaders have mastered this important skill.

A left-brain (rational) manager may be able to deliver results short term, but to be a true inspirational leader you cannot be one or the other, left-brained (rational) or right-brained (emotional), science or heart. As my mentor and friend, James (Jim) Michael Lafferty (who

has kindly agreed to contribute to this book with his perspective on inspirational leadership), always said, “Take care of your people (employees, customers, stakeholders), and the business takes care of itself.”

That is what leading like a girl is all about, leading with your head AND your heart to maximize employee potential and deliver results.

Lead Like A Girl is my story of challenging social conventions and leading with Purpose, Perseverance, People and Positivity as core guiding principles as I lead my teams, family towards a productive yet happy life. In this book, I offer practical tips and advice that worked for me in hopes they might help you on your exciting journey of personal growth.

Introduction - Who is the girl behind this book?

Born in Israel to British parents, I never felt challenged by society for being a girl. Our prime minister at the time, Golda Meir, was coined ‘a woman with balls’ and inspired the nation by being both feminine and bold. As the first Israeli in my family, I inherited the Israeli ‘Chutzpa’ and I learned early on how to be a leader, both in courage and in stamina. In part, thanks to Golda Meir. As early as age 5, I would walk up to a policeman to argue against his parking ticket, or later with my teachers, I’d speak up any time I felt some injustice towards any of my peers. I developed insane stamina as a competitive gymnast working relentlessly to beat my own personal best; and later as a gymnastics coach who inspired others to do the same thing. At 18, I joined the Israeli Defense Forces. As I was brought up to always do my best, I accepted the challenge to progress to the officer’s course and became a platoon commander. I had a team of six commanders and oversaw 250 soldiers. Except for one of my soldiers turning her gun at me during shooting practice to ask a question, and a terror attack the night I was commander-in-charge, my army duty was a very pleasant experience. It was a crash course in leadership and a real character builder.

After taking a year to travel the world with my boyfriend (now hubby), I went on to study Psychology and Business at Tel-Aviv University. I loved studying and finished summa cum laude (with the highest distinction) in both degrees, with my friends and family sure I would continue my studies and do a master’s in Psychology.

But when Procter & Gamble came to recruit for the first time ever in Israel, I applied and when I got the job, I decided to take the opportunity and relocate with them to Geneva,

Switzerland. I promised myself I would raise my kids as an educated layman, not as a clinical psychologist and return to the amazing world of psychology when I was 'old and wise.'

My first and best business decision I made was who to marry, my hubby, Dror. While we went to the same high school and never dated, we shocked everyone when we hooked up during my time in the army. He is a crazy dreamer and I'm a realist who makes those dreams come true. He has always been my biggest supporter and for him nothing is impossible as life is one big adventure. So, when I showed up at our apartment door in Israel with the P&G offer, his first reaction was, "Geneva? Sure, why not? They have amazing skiing!" And so, in 1998 we moved as a young couple to Switzerland.

The beginning wasn't as smooth as we hoped. We thought Dror's courses would be accredited and overlooked a simple fact that engineering studies at École Polytechnic (the closest equivalent to the school Dror started in Israel) were actually in French. Dror proved that 'where there is a will, there is a way.' He picked up French from zero to University level and finished his degree. Our days were filled with work, skiing and having an amazing life in Europe's *joie de vivre sans enfant* (joy of life without kids)!

My career in P&G was thriving and I was the only breadwinner as Dror finished his studies. In 2002, my eldest Mia was born. As Dror was not yet working, we decided to turn lemons to lemonade and take advantage of our time. We put Mia in the baby carrier and leveraged my extended maternity leave to travel. In three months, we travelled to Southern France – with a napkin over her head, we would enjoy Michelin restaurants at night and wine tours during the days, then on to New York and Canada. My Mia was born to be a jetsetter. I always tell Mia she is the one I fell in love with first – I put her in the baby carrier on my chest and haven't let her off my chest since.

When we came back, Dror struggled to find a job. He was very frustrated. I told him, "I promise you that by the time you are 40, you will be a millionaire making your own money, and then you will look back and be so grateful that you spent Mia's first year at home." Dror was an amazing dad, and Mia was lucky to have him to herself. You must let your partner be a real partner; if they don't take ownership for bathing and changing nappies in the first few months, it will never happen. To this day, Dror is a better cook than I am; has bursts of cleaning out the fridge and kitchen, (everyone around beware!) and is the most devoted dad I know!

Our parenting style was quite relaxed. My mum always said, “You can change your life to adapt to your kids, or have your kids adapt to yours.” Clearly, we chose the latter.

Literally three months after Mia’s birth, I became pregnant again – do NOT believe in the cautionary tale that breast feeding prevents pregnancy! I’d been back to work for a month when I realized I was pregnant. I went to my new boss, Stassi Anastassov’s office, shaking, to tell him I was pregnant again. His reaction was textbook. He first said, “Congratulations that is amazing news!” He then said, “Having the two so close is the best thing you can do for them and for yourself.” And then he said, “Remember over the next months, yours and your baby’s health is the number one priority so please take it easy!” I was so grateful; in the remaining nine months I literally completed the work that was scheduled in for two years.

My son Liam was born in 2003 and proved at his birth to reflect his life character—never in a rush until the last moment. He was one week late, but when he finally chose to appear, he was out in six minutes. It was so fast that the umbilical cord got wrapped around his neck and he came out looking like a frog, a frog who later become my prince.

During my second maternity, as I needed to keep my brain somewhat functioning, I decided to collate all the tips and advice I had received into an internal P&G booklet I called, *MOM: Managing Our Maternity*. It ended up a huge hit. It was translated into 26 languages and our president Paul Polman gave it the Diversity Award for 2002. My journey with women’s empowerment had begun. I was touched to receive so many thank you notes from working mums at P&G and decided that one day I would write a similar story-advice book to all women and men struggling with Work/Life balance challenges. This was the inspiration for why I wrote this book.

Dror finally landed a job as a brand manager in a small company of ex-P&Gers. At a party one day, his boss, who actually recruited me, tried to persuade me that I should move to Russia, the biggest and fastest developing country. He’d said, “Your career will thrive and hey, I have a great role for Dror there as well!”. (He needed Dror in Russia and if Dror relocated too, P&G would pay the relocation fees – smart!)

I went to my boss Stassi the next day saying we were open to the move to Russia in a couple of years. A week later the call came; “The FemCare brand manager role, it’s yours if you want it.” We flew to Moscow for our first expat ‘Look and See’ – as if a good look wasn’t

enough, you needed to look AND see. The temperature was well below zero, everyone we met was grumpy—‘What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’—seemed to be a motto in Russia, but we knew it would be good for our little family, and so we moved.

From paying all my salary to our cleaning lady in Geneva – I kid you not, she made almost as much as I did! – on an expat package in Russia, we suddenly could afford a nanny, a cook AND a driver. The weather was terrible, and we worked like crazy commuting two-to-three hours a day, but we committed to making our work/life balance work. We had the kids nap till 18:00 so that at 19:00 we could take them down to the warm pool, have dinner and play and keep our rule of a two-hour minimum of fun-filled quality time with the kids every day.

My career was thriving. As a young manager committed to people growth, I built a high-performing team and we made history overtaking the long-standing market leader, Bella. I also decided to give back and founded the P&G women’s network of Russia.

And so, at the end of three successful years in Moscow, I was promoted to Associate Marketing Director (AMD) back in Switzerland and we even managed to save our first meaningful sum that enabled us to buy our first house on the shores of Lake Geneva. I will talk about this more in the chapter on goal setting but suddenly at 35 we were on our way with two kids, two successful jobs and a house.

In 2008, our third child, warrior Anna, was born. In the third trimester, I was diagnosed with Cytomegalovirus (CMV), the dangerous strain that can impact the fetus. We had to wait six months to confirm if the baby was okay and only then did we tell the kids – all their friends would ask me if I was having a baby and I would reply, “I am just fat...” That year, as global Associate Marketing Director for Tampax, I was working on a new breakthrough, a fully digital, first-ever global campaign for Tampax called “Tampax Mother Nature.” The big idea was to personify Mother Nature as a pushy aunt who shows up with her monthly gift at the worst possible moment.

The first digital edit failed but I insisted we were onto something huge for the target audience which saw a period as a nuisance and to be avoided. That said, I remember staying up at night wondering whether God didn’t like me “taking the mickey” out of Mother Nature and therefore punished me with CMV. The positive results for both my baby and the campaign

ad testing came in, and I was so grateful that God had a sense of humor too. I gave birth to non-identical twins, as baby Anna and my new campaign went live on the same day.

My baby Anna proved to be the bravest girl I have ever seen, climbing up a bungee pole with my husband to encourage Mia to jump and ending up jumping first to show her how it's done, all at the mere age of three.

As for my other baby, it went on to become a huge success. I will never forget coming back from maternity a week early, when I suddenly got hundreds of calls to jump on this global call. It was announced my campaign won Campaign of the Year, but as they thought I was still out, they had the North American AMD present the work, with no mention of me whatsoever. Friends and mentors immediately texted me, "Don't worry, everyone who is important knows it was your work." It stung to not be included in the accolades for my hard work and my ideas. Lesson learnt. Take ownership of your work, or others will.

Ever since 1995 when we took that year off, travelling Asia after the army, my hubby and I always dreamt of living in Asia and so in 2010, I included this interest in my official annual 'work and development plan.'

In May of 2010, I got the call. "Do you still want Asia?" my boss asked. "Sure. Tomorrow." Was my reply. "Ok," my boss said, "That's all I needed to know." He was calling me during the department talent review. I then realized he was serious and texted him, "Hey, how 'tomorrow' are we talking about – you know three kids, schools, husband?" and he texted back, "Well don't get too excited as it's a huge role but if you get it, they want you there next month" *Ah!*

And so, after we spent two years building our house by the lake in Geneva in January we moved in; in June we opened the pool, and in July we moved out. We were relocating to Singapore!

Singapore has been very good to us; we've been here since 2010. The kids are thriving, we have an incredible community of friends and Dror opened a super successful high-tech business – he actually met his business partner, Joel on the steps of the Singapore Synagogue on Jewish New Year and they have been married ever since!

For me, work was also great. I was able to work my passion 100% of the time, whether this was establishing the P&G women's network in Singapore; spending half my time coaching

and training, or spending the other half creating iconic women's empowerment campaigns as my role as FemCare Director for Asia.

But after 17 amazing years at P&G I felt a need for a change, I was getting stale. On top of that, the company wanted me back in Geneva while my husband's company was thriving in Singapore. After 17 years of me being the lead, it was time for me to put my money where my mouth was and make the career switch that was right for him, so he could now make his million dollars I knew he would make.

P&G was amazing to me and gave me a six-month paid gardening leave. I didn't do much 'gardening,' but I met a life-long dream to become a yoga instructor as well as a neuro-leadership executive coach, and I still do both in my free time to keep my life in balance.

I always enjoyed the challenge of complete business transformation, and so I declined all offers in Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) and after my six-month leave, decided to take up a role as Chief Marketing Officer—Asia in an electronics white goods company (air conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines). I loved the global CEO and CMO and the vision they had to turn the company from a product and sales-led focus to consumer-led. It all seemed perfect on paper – I had a small team and budget, but I was expected to reinvent the whole thing, organization, commercial launch process, digital transformation, go-to-market – everything. I knew this role was a challenge but one I was excited to take!

Unfortunately, I was up for quite a surprise. It was during this time that my lifelong guiding values, my 4Ps – Purpose, Perseverance, People and Positivity –were challenged.

To start with, I underestimated the change management challenge. Unlike P&G where 'the consumer is boss' was the drive, for my new boss it was 'money is the boss' – everything was about a score card and return on investment (ROI) and there was no psychological safety – It was ROI or you die!

I was the only woman on a leadership team of 14 except for the HR function which then saw four changes in the three years I was there, and I operated in a very judgmental and ego-centric culture. Two of my male peers wanted my job and didn't get it, and so I had built-in enemies which sometimes gave me the feeling I was swimming in a pool of sharks.

And as if that wasn't challenging enough, two months into the role, my line manager changed and in walked my challenger, a Six Sigma Black Belt (the six-sigma quality-assurance

business method originated in manufacturing to focus on previous mistakes for continuous growth). He didn't care for what was working, his focus was on what to fix. This super hierarchal manager made it very clear it was 'My way or the highway' and indeed 7 of 14 managers chose the highway; six managers managed to 'manage' him – a lot of boy's club golf and poker involved there – and one (myself) was sticking out like a sore thumb.

Technically professional, and supported by the global CMO, I was delivering the consumer-led transformation and building a kick-ass team of marketing professionals, but I was far from being obedient. I was brought up to be brave and speak my mind, while my boss expected obedience and keeping face and so as you can imagine, this was a match made in hell.

Here's a contrast for you. When I was at P&G, I was in my first GM's office, (yes, this was Jim Lafferty) so frustrated with a challenge that I started to weep. It was embarrassing, so I desperately tried to regain my composure.

Jim looked me in the eye and said, "Dalia, don't ever be embarrassed for crying in the office. It is a sign of your passion, and passion is your X-factor. If you ever work at a place where people don't appreciate that, walk away. They don't deserve you."

At this new company, I was in my boss's office. He was criticizing me. This was not just tough love. When he started criticizing my team, it was too much for me and my eyes filled with tears.

He smiled at me and offered a tissue box. For a moment I had a warm feeling, remembering Jim. But then he turned the box around to show me a handmade sticker that read, 'Dalia's Tissue Box.'

I was speechless for a moment before saying, "You must be kidding! I should complain to HR."

"Come on, Dalia!" he said. "It is just boy banter. I know you have a sense of humor."

A few days later I was standing with my all-male C-suite colleagues, debating over something. My boss walked up to us and said, "You think Dalia is such a tough cookie, an Israeli ex-platoon commander? Did you know she has a tissue box in my office with her name on it?"

Have you ever felt belittled, diminished, destroyed because people told you what you do, or who saw you as weak? Used your emotions against you?

In that moment I knew. One person saw my tears as my passion, and another mocked me for my weakness. As in his upbringing, men don't cry, and leaders definitely can't cry.

I needed to leave; I was being demeaned and my values were challenged to the core.

I loved my role and my team and was determined to make it work, not only for my family as I was making a VERY hefty salary, but also for myself and the women in the organization. After three years when I felt I delivered everything expected of me, I left.

What's the next chapter for me?

A month after I left, I was invited to speak in Singapore at 'EVE', a huge women's conference. I was the only 'non-professional' speaker at that event, surrounded by world renowned speakers like Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar – Harvard's most popular professor for happiness studies. I was shaking, but I went on stage and told my story. The reactions from the women blew me away as they rated me among the highest speakers, and many came to me and said I should write a book. I always thought my life is too normal to be interesting but they said it was something about the relatability of my stories as a working mum and wife as well as the authenticity of my storytelling that captivated them and everyone could take out at least one inspiration to act upon based on my unique case. It was very rewarding.

Dr Ben-Shahar who I be-friended, just the evening before also secretly attended my speech sitting quietly at the back of the room. "You must write these stories down," he advised. "Not many people have such vast corporate experience and the reflective psychological mind to make sense of all of it. These everyday stories can be a gift to all women and men to bring out their best authentic self and live a happier, fulfilling life."

Whoa!

And so, I decided to take a time out from the very lucrative corporate life. I love being a working mum and I always felt the most critical child-rearing years are 0-5 years old, but there is something to be said about the importance of helicopter parenting especially for teens during their final exams that cannot be done when both parents are on a plane.

When I stopped to ask myself what it was about my job that I enjoyed so much, I realized it was people, and so I decided to design a new portfolio career with a dedication to people. I discovered in a process I will describe in **Chapter 1**, that my purpose is to help people find *their* purpose and live a life of flow with Purpose, People first, Perseverance AND Positivity.

With my “why” clearer, my “what” and “how” just presented themselves before me. I got accepted as an adjunct professor at the Singapore Management School. I coach, train and speak on different leadership topics and especially these 4P core-guiding principles of leading like a girl. Because with purpose, people, perseverance and positivity, who said that playing like a girl can’t mean winning the game?

Why am I writing this now and what is in it for you?

I have spent the last 12 months in a beautiful, reflective space. I’m clear and ready to share. With my practical 20-year corporate C-suite experience, mum and wife education, yoga teacher and executive coach training as well as more recently taking up a degree in INSEAD business school’s Executive Master in Change (EMC) and enrolling in Tal Ben-Shahar’s ‘Happiness Studies Academy’ (positive psychology) to complete my practical experience with theoretical underpinning – I feel prepared.

Brave to Lead Like A Girl is for all women and men struggling to keep it all in balance. After writing my first blog under this title, I was grateful to find that more than 60% of the comments came from men who were inspired by the blog to be a better husband, father and evolve from the role of a manager to that of an inspirational leader. This was further proof that we *all* struggle with how to be happier in our lives; leverage our strengths and manage our weaknesses; balance our different life roles and add value in a way that is in line with our hearts.

Many of the experiences in this book could happen or have happened to many of you. Therefore, I hope to share my personal learnings and the scientific underpinning I have picked up together with actionable tips you can start implementing ASAP to inspire and enable us all, men and women:

To lead from our head AND our heart.

To be strong enough to be human.

To be brave to lead like a girl.

So we all can be the best we can be and lead successful, happier and meaningful lives.

With deepest gratitude,

Namaste,

Dalia Feldheim

Singapore July 2019

Chapter 1

Lead with Purpose, Live in Flow

It was 1998 and I was 25, a young Associate Brand Manager (ABM) at Procter & Gamble in Geneva, Switzerland leading the FemCare brands for Israel. That meant I handled brands like Always, Alldays and Tampax and my job was to promote sales of the products for Israel and the West Bank markets.

This was very important business as these brands held a 55% market share and were a key profit driver for the Near East group at the time. Our key competitor Kotex announced they were going to enter the Israeli market. Their top brands were heavy on our tails for market share and we didn't want to lose our positioning. In brand marketing, you learn early on that in a situation like this, your best defense is in fortressing your strengths. I learned to apply this tactic to my life as well; but more about that later.

I decided to fortress my business but not by pushing the product, but by better-serving the needs of women at each life stage. We came up with a campaign that ran much deeper than a great product; it spoke to the sense of self-confidence women should feel any day of the month.

We narrowed our focus on Point of Market Entry (POME) and partnered with the Ministry of Education on a mission to educate young girls on hygiene at schools and started a nation-wide program in all schools for the 12- and 15-year-old.

However, we found our weak spot was Point of Market Change (POMC) with female consumers between the ages of 18 to 22 years old. The reason being is that at this age, Israeli girls enter the army as serving in the Israel Defense Forces is compulsory for men and women in Israel. Now with their tightly budgeted army pocket money, they start buying their own (cheaper) products. We needed to increase relevancy and value for this age group. We decided to approach the army and offered to sample the girls with product. We knew we needed to be of value to the army and to the girls and hence came up with the idea of providing them with a wash kit that had special sealed-off compartments for their pads and tampons. As an ex-platoon commander for girls just five years before, I remembered the embarrassment of having to carry these supplies to the outside showers and the pain, as they would often get soggy and ruined in usual wash kits. The army loved the idea and gave us permission to sample every 18-year-old recruited.

But I wanted to add a more personalized note of encouragement. And so, I sat down and started to write a note to these girls as an inspirational starting point for my advertising agency to develop because I distinctly remembered my first day in the army, having gotten on the bus, saying goodbye to my parents and friends and not knowing anyone yet. Then looking at my new uniform and through

some of the gifts I received from friends and family and thinking, “How will I manage? Who will take care of me now?”

I wrote about not just the importance of hygiene in the army, but also on the pride they should feel as women stepping up and serving their country as equals to their male counterparts.

I lost track of time and fell asleep overnight in the office and when my boss came in the next morning, I showed him the note. He had a tear in his eye and asked me not to have the agency re-write it, but to print this letter of encouragement as is. He insisted I sign my real name and former title so they knew this note was coming from an ex-platoon commander. He didn't allow this letter to be touched for the five years we were there running the army sampling program.

I still remember the letters we received from the girls and their mums thanking us for the insightful gift and note and for being there and supporting them on such a critical day.

That was my first encounter with Purpose. I realized I was not selling pads but promoting self-esteem and women's empowerment.

Our next point of weakness was the women's Orthodox community. We needed to find a creative way to get to them as this community does not consume public media deemed inappropriate -- advertisements about period products included. We knew we needed a forum where women were alone. A husband or son getting a sample of the pads to the house was a big no-no. We discovered that all Orthodox women meet at the *Mikve*, a community bath that offers the gift of purity and holiness after their menstruation. We aligned with the managing authority there to offer samples to these ladies. But again, we didn't just sample the product, we shared a note on the equality of women.

On one of my visits to one of the biggest purifying baths, they asked me to talk a little bit about myself and my journey. A year later, I went back to tour the *Mikve* program to assess how it was going. A young lady walked up to me and said, “*Mazel Tov*. I see you got married.” I was shocked she not only remembered me from the previous year, but also noticed I now had a wedding ring on my finger! She told me my talk inspired her to delay her arranged marriage and finish her studies. She shared that she had opened her own business and was doing very well.

I was amazed by the impact my little talk had ... and it was another reminder that I was doing something right, professionally and personally.

At the end of a twelve-month period, we had an immensely strong fortress and our shares soared from 55% to 68%. Even better, Kotex delayed their entry into the market by 3 years and P&G's strong market leadership in Israel was established.

That year I really didn't sleep much; I was so passionate and happy with what I was doing. I felt a huge sense of purpose. I was bursting with ideas. I was glowing. I was in Flow.

The term Flow was introduced by Professor Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, one of the fathers of Positive Psychology, to describe a state of complete absorption in an experience that is rewarding. Sometimes, it is also referred to as Meditation in Action, "Being in the Zone," losing yourself in what you are doing and being in a state in which action and awareness are merged.

Purpose is defined as "the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists." Our usefulness and our contribution is such a fundamental part of leading a happy and fulfilled life. From a neurological perspective, the reward of contribution to something outside of yourself comes in the form of a rush of oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin – what neuroscientists call the "happiness trifecta." Oxytocin supports empathy and social bonding. Dopamine plays a major role in motivation and movement. Serotonin regulates mood. But not only does being pulled by something bigger than us impact mood and motivation, it has also been scientifically proven to make us more resilient.

Or as Nietzsche said, "He who has a WHY in life can tolerate any how."

Finding purpose is not about leaving your day job to roam the world, rather, it's looking at your current job to identify what YOU are passionate about and how you can contribute to the world by following this passion. And the true magic occurs when you are able to align your personal purpose to your brand and company purpose.

I was over the moon when, in 2010, I landed the role of FemCare Marketing director for Asia and we moved to Singapore. One of my biggest markets was India and I fell in love with the women of India. I was in awe of their passion and commitment to self-development. I have a vivid memory of a young girl, eleven or twelve years old, sitting on a stool trying to read a book. There was no light in her house, and so she was reading the book by the light of the passing cars! That is determination.

As a foreigner, I also was in awe of their cultural beliefs.

To get to know a bit of the culture and speak directly with women, we went on home visits. I vividly remember the day we walked into a middle-class home, and I noticed a girl sitting on the floor. I remember looking at the blue wall behind her and noticed the paint was peeling and worn out just in that spot, as if she sat there often. When the mum came in with drinks, she served the young girl drinks on the floor! I was puzzled. Uncles and aunties came in and greeted the family and then greeted her on the floor. As she greeted them back, I noticed a sad, embarrassed look on her face. "What was going on here?" I thought.

When we left the house, I asked my local agency representative, “What was that all about?” And they told me, “She is on her period.” I asked, “So what?” They told me, “Well, we believe women should stay isolated during their period.”

I was stunned. I now understood the sad look on the girl’s face. My agency partner went on, “The origin of this was positive, women were over burdened with house and child care, so they get a week off and not allowed into the kitchen to avoid them being sucked in. Also, with no sanitary protection, areas which are religious should be avoided as bodily reject is un pure” and then she smiled and said, “We even believe women on their periods are not allowed to touch pickles as we believe the bacteria in the menses will make them go bad.” And finally, she added, “Yes despite modern sanitary progress, the nation is still struck by regressive myths, casting girls away for a week a month”.

While this cultural behavior may have solid reasons in the olden days, we both were saddened by the regressive negative connotation’s periods have today and the impact it must have on young girls.

That night, I couldn’t stop thinking about that young girl’s sad, embarrassed look. Together with my local team and agency, we decided to try and tackle this cultural norm in the most respectful way and for the next year we were deep in research and developing our campaign to change the stigma behind periods. Finally, in Summer 2014 we launched our campaign, “I Touched The Pickle.” This BBDO India advertisement ended up becoming the most virally watched ad in India for 2014; was the winner of the Cannes Sheryl Sandberg Glass Lion Grand Prix Award that “implicitly or explicitly addresses issues of gender inequality or prejudice,” and more importantly, started a conversation that’s still going about women’s equality in India.

Also that year, we were looking to redesign the global equity for Always. We knew we wanted to evolve from selling pads to promoting self-esteem and wanted to find a way to do this at a global scale. My General Manager, Edgar Sandoval, a huge purpose advocate, now CEO of the biggest NGO in America, loved this new equity and challenged our agency, Leo Burnett, to come up with a breakthrough that would, for the first time, focus on the purpose of the brand instead of hard-selling the new product we were launching. When we saw the first video cut of the idea, “Always #LikeAGirl,” our entire team teared up. The agency had nailed it. This was exactly what we were looking for! I personally felt my years of focusing on purpose in our communication had reached a new high and as we say in the business, BIG ideas travel globally. Within two weeks we were able to persuade 26 markets across North America, Europe and Asia to invest even though it was the last day of the fiscal year. The campaign went on air June 26, 2014 and as mentioned in the preface, became a global icon for women’s empowerment.

While at P&G, I was very lucky that I was able to focus 100% of my time on my purpose, people empowerment. From the teams I built, the trainings I led, the women's networks I participated in and later founded to the consumers I served, my career wasn't a job, it was a calling because I was living and working on purpose.-

I want to offer you another example about purpose that extends outside of our work lives.

I have one living grandma left – My *Booby*– she is 105 (bless her) and is sharp and independent and amazing, but last year she fell sick and was admitted to hospital. When I got the call from my mum that she may not make it, I caught the first plane to Israel. The first couple of days were horrible—my grandma was sleeping most of the time and in her few waking moments seemed that she was talking to her long-gone siblings.

On the third day, we decided to bring in a huge poster we had made for my grandma's 100th birthday with the pictures of all her clan, 3 kids, 6 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and even 2 great-great grandchildren. Every waking moment we would talk to my *Booby* about the people in the pictures.

With all the attention and focus on the clan, my *Booby* stopped talking about her relatives and started to refocus on her clan slowly. She came back to current days — she remembered her purpose to live and within 6 days was let out of hospital. She told me she had no idea where she had been those 6 days, but was glad she came back. I believe purpose brought her back to us.

How To Get To Your Purpose

My friend Dana is a lawyer. She came to me because she was having trouble identifying her purpose.

She's very strong with her mediation practice, has an amazing sense of humour and is passionate about protecting those who can't be protected. She is passionate about the world's empathy crisis, especially among teens and believes there is a need to help resolve conflict through empathy.

Dana joined my 'Discover Your Purpose' program and together we redesigned her purpose via the Purpose Exercise below. Here's what we came up with:

Dana discovered that her purpose is to awaken empathy so that we can resolve conflict and widen the ripples of goodness for a better world.

She went on to write a parent's guide for travelling with kids, runs workshops for parents and even decided to use her sense of humor to run an annual stand-up comedy event about conflict resolution between parents and kids to raise money for kids in Nepal.

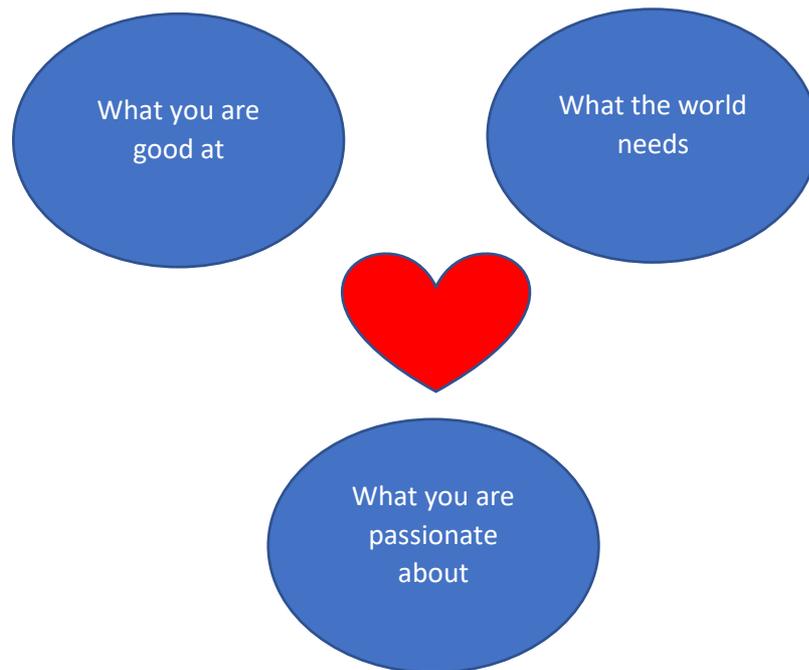
The Purpose Exercise will not give you a compass, but a map to start exploring your calling and realizing what it is within the current work you are doing, that is most aligned to your purpose and should be expanded to give you more job satisfaction and enhance your performance. To get you in flow. Good luck!

Quote Love the work you do, and you will never work another day in your life. Anonymous

Purpose Exercise –Strength, Passion and Needs Assessment

To get to your purpose, you'll need to examine your strengths, passion and needs and the intersections therein. This concept is based in *Ikigai*, a Japanese term that means the reason of being. The term is used to indicate that sweet spot or balance where these three elements converge.

Look at this diagram and think about what is your *Ikigai*, where do these concepts intertwine for you?



And now the work:

1. What you are good at:

Write down all your strengths. You should have this from previous job assessments, 360 feedback or feel free to do the free strength finder assessment found in this link:

<http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>

Skill Strength 1 _____

Skill Strength 2 _____

Skill Strength 3 _____

Skill Strength 4 _____

Skill Strength 5 _____

2. What you are passionate about:

Sometimes you can be great at things you're less passionate about; good for you! Now think about those things you *love* doing, that you would do without pay, or that you easily get sucked into.

Passion Strength 1 _____

Passion Strength 2 _____

Passion Strength 3 _____

Passion Strength 4 _____

Passion Strength 5 _____

3. What the world needs:

This is about mining the competitive landscape to understand what is an unmet need in the lives of people you want to serve. Where can you add most value?

World Needs Strength 1 _____

World Needs Strength 2 _____

World Needs Strength 3 _____

World Needs Strength 4 _____

World Needs Strength 5 _____

Now spend some time to reflect on the three buckets above; what can you offer the world that is uniquely yours, that you are strong and passionate about and you know there is a need for it?

That is your purpose.

Keep working on assessing what you're good at, what you're passionate about and what the world needs. Get this concept down to one sentence. You can end with something like this:

My purpose is to _____ (verb contribution) **So That** _____ (impact on others).

Exercise 2

Partner work— Find your purpose—

Our roots determine our purpose.

This process is inspired by Simon Sinek's *Find Your Why* workbook. The idea here is that our past experiences determine who we are and it's the link between these meaningful experiences that can help you determine your purpose.

Step 1—Find a partner you want to work this with. This person doesn't need to be a coach, but they need to be a good listener.

Step 2—Preparing your life's lessons. Write down 5-10 stories that define who you are today;

- a) What was the earliest defining moment- happiest or saddest moment that made a big impact?
- b) Who was a person that made a big impact what did they say or do?
- c) Think of a time you were in the zone- what happened that made you feel that way
- d) What was a pivotal moment in your life when you realized life will never be the same?
- e) What have you accomplished that you are very proud of- who was there to support you?

Step 3—Story telling: share these stories with as much detail as possible. Try to determine what you have learnt, what others have contributed to this education, and what was the impact you had on others.

Your partner should use the "*Find Your WHY*" worksheet in appendix 1 to write down the stories and more importantly, the meanings in the given boxes. Here are a few good guiding questions to mine out the meaning:

- When this happened how did it make you feel?
- Who else was involved and how did they make a difference on you?
- What is it about this story that was so impactful?
- How did this experience affect you and who did you become?
- What is the lesson you learnt from that experience that you carry with you today?

Step 4—Together look for themes, circle words and phrases that repeat. Write all the themes that come up. There could be many, write them all down. Once all the themes are written down, circle 1 or 2 that seem bigger than the others. The ones that jump off the page that you love more than others.

Choose one theme which talks about your unique contribution to the world and one theme that drives the impact of this contribution.

Step 5—Take a first crack at your purpose using the below phrase;

My purpose is to _____ (verb contribution) **So That** _____ (impact on others).

Step 6—Validation. The “Best Friend” exercise.

Ask your close friends what it is about you that makes them want to be close friends. Ask them to be as specific as possible and to answer in writing. Use their answer and language to refine your purpose statement. (So they don't think you have lost your mind, you can say you are doing some course and got this as a task and would appreciate their thought;-)

Appendix 1- Find Your WHY worksheet

Story Facts Write down your life story. Stories need to be as specific as possible – tell your story with as much detail as possible. Connect to the memories and the emotions.	Meaning Focus on the feelings, emotions or interpretations of the meaning of the story. Note the Contribution of what others gave them learning or what they gave others and the Impact .
0-15 Years Old	
15-30 Years Old	

>30 Years Old	

Identify all the themes

Circle words and phrases that repeat within the stories.

Now choose one theme that seems most important in terms of contribution and one in terms of impact.

Theme 1 _____

Theme 2 _____

Theme 3 _____

Theme 4 _____

Theme 5 _____

Now take 30 minutes in a quiet place to draft down your purpose using this draft:

My purpose is to _____ (verb contribution) **So That** _____ (impact on others).

Continue to evolve and revise using your best friend feedback.

Examples:

- Dalia- My purpose is to inspire and enable others to find their purpose and be their personal best, so that together we can illuminate our world.

With your WHY much clearer, you will be amazed how WHAT you do and HOW you do it becomes clearer. You take on every new task and ask- how can I shift it to be more in line with my purpose.

Inspired by my purpose I started writing, teaching, speaking and doing volunteer work among women and people with disabilities to reach their full potential.

Chapter 3:

The science of goal setting – if you aim for the moon you are bound to reach the stars!

In 2001, I was a young Associate Brand Manager at Procter and Gamble, newly married, living on one salary as my husband was still studying at University. I attended an inspiring lecture at P&G. The keynote speaker spoke of her father; an encyclopedia salesman. Every year her dad would write how much he wanted to make that year and placed that note in his wallet. Once he reached that goal, he would take out a pen and write a new goal and put it in his wallet. Slowly, he moved up to head salesman, took out a small loan, opened the first stamp loyalty business and later became owner of one of the biggest global travel agents. This man was Curt Carlson, founder of Carlson Wagonlit Travel and the speaker was his daughter, Marilyn Carlson Nelson who was later promoted to CEO of the company.

At the end she gave each of us a little card. On one side there was the company credo and her personal moto which I remember till today, "They drew a circle in the sand and left me out, I drew a bigger circle and included me in." On the other side of the card there was a blank space, where she urged us to write down five goals we wanted to have achieved in five years. I remember she encouraged us to dream big so I wrote a few crazy things:

1. I want to be a mum of two (I was newly married);
2. I want to be promoted twice to Associate Director (this would take 8 years);
3. I want my husband to be a successful businessman making \$1M in his own right;
4. I wanted to have an international experience;

And then I added a total wild card:

5. I want to own a house in Geneva by the lake (she said to dream big!)

I put that card in my purse and totally forgot about it. A lot of crazy things happened over the next five years. As mentioned, I got pregnant fast with my daughter and had my son three months after going back to work, so that meant I had them only 14 months apart.

My husband got a job offer in Moscow and we decided to take it. Moving as expats with rent and schooling paid enabled us to save some money for the first time in our lives. This move was not only good for us financially, but my husband did well in his job and so did I.

I had amazing bosses rooting for me and got promoted twice within five years. And crazily enough, when we returned to Geneva in 2006, we took the \$200k we managed to save and bought a house within walking distance from Lake Geneva in Switzerland. This house was significantly

undervalued due to a tenant who refused to leave and hadn't made any improvements in a million years. With a stroke of luck and good people skills, we managed to get the tenant out and my husband proved to be an amazingly creative project manager—he would take me to choose the materials I liked and then find a way to get the same for half the cost— for example we built our pool based on the number of tiles he found on eBay from a lady who bought too many. My boss kept encouraging us to 'lean forward' as you only build the house once, and we ended up building a much bigger house than intended which later tripled in price.

As I was unpacking in our new home, I found that card I wrote back in 2001 in an old purse; that crazy 'dream big' note I had written five years ago. I looked at it and couldn't believe my eyes, *everything on my dream list had come true!* I had no idea back then that we would get the offer to move to Russia that would make a lot of my dreams possible. I looked at the card again in total disbelief, but indeed everything I dreamt back in 2001 had come true by 2006. I sat there looking at the card, looking up at my kids playing in this beautiful house we built with our own hands and started crying with gratitude.

Ever since then, I became a big believer in goal setting. Neuroscience, the study of the nervous system and the brain, has proven that setting goals is key for a successful life and that people who set goals are more likely to achieve better results and obtain overall wellbeing versus those who do not set goals.

The science behind it is simple, when you set goals, and imagine yourself achieving these goals, your brain releases dopamine and other 'feel good' hormones. It also decreases cortisol and other stress-related inhibiting hormones, enabling you to release more energy towards creativity and problem solving which then gives you the focus and resources needed to achieve these goals.

Pretty amazing right? By setting goals, you'll know where you are heading, you will start noticing elements and opportunities related to your goals and even subconsciously take risks getting you closer to your goals, like our somewhat crazy decision to move to Russia.

So, knowing that you need to set goals is one thing; knowing how to do that is another. First you must look at the type of goals you are setting.

Happiness expert Tal Ben-Shahar, a great man and now a close friend, created Harvard's most popular course in positive psychology. In order to obtain happiness, you need to pursue wholesomeness by striving for growth in each of the SPIRE components; **S**piritual, **P**hysical, **I**ntellectual, **R**elationship and **E**motional growth. To be at your happiest self, he suggests your goals fall into the "want to" category versus "have to." To ensure you are going after these types of goals, he suggests your goals have the following components of the 3A's:

- **Affection**—These are goals you are passionate about (i.e., ask yourself what do I REALLY want to do -vs- what SHOULD I do),
- **Authenticity**—These goals are in-line with your values and strengths, and
- **Autonomy**—These are goals that you have selected on your own, versus those set for you by parents or others.

Ready to get started?

You can go to a coach to help you set goals which is a great experience or, with a bit of time spent self-reflecting, you can set goals yourself.

Many people avoid setting goals as they don't know HOW they are going to achieve them. The advice here is, don't worry about the HOW yet. Focus on the WHY and the WHAT, and when you are clear about the destination, the road map will present itself to you. I couldn't have imagined taking up a move to Moscow, but it came, and we jumped on it, and that willingness to leap made all the difference. In this case, we were more focused on the 'why,' we knew we wanted to have an adventure and do what was good for our family and our careers.

Leadership expert Simon Sinek advises to start with the WHY. Here are a few questions to get you started (refer back to Chapter 1 on finding your purpose for more help):

- ✓ Why are you here on earth?
- ✓ What are you good at?
- ✓ What are you passionate about?
- ✓ What does the world need and in what areas can you contribute?
- ✓ What will people say about you on your 80th birthday? (Imagine this!);
 - What do you want to **BE** as a human being?
 - What do you want to **HAVE**?
 - What do you want to **DO**?

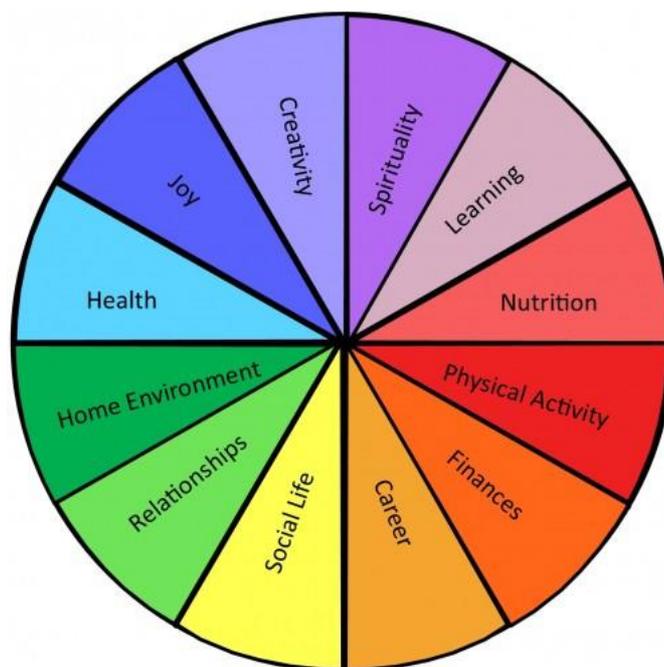
Sit down in a quiet place and write it all down. Dream big.

Now that you've started thinking about the WHY you can dig deeper. Goal setting usually comes up for people because they want to change something in their lives. Change is a good thing, but you'll need to keep refining your WHY to get to the good stuff. What areas of your life need work?

Here is a useful tool I like to use, it is basically a wheel of life; it includes all of the little pieces of the pie that make up your whole life like relationships, learning, creativity and career, and as shared before, the 4 of the 5 dimensions of SPIRE – Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual and Relationships.

Look at your wheel of life and take some time to assess how you believe you are doing in all these critical areas of your life. Give yourself a score between 1-10, with 1 being low and 10 being high, for each of the pieces of the pie. Do you feel good about your eating habits and do you make it to the gym five times a week? If that's what you want in life, maybe the Health pie gets a 10! Are you so busy at work that you barely make it home in time to feed your cat, change into your pajamas and roll into bed with no time for friends or weekend brunch? If this isn't what you want for yourself, then maybe the Social Life pie gets at 2.

This is a great way to see how you are doing on each of these critical dimensions; the results may surprise you. The great thing is, once you have your numbers, you can see which areas to focus on to help you set goals that will help you achieve a balanced and fulfilled life.



Simply setting goals isn't enough. You must make sure your goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic and Time bound. Doing this ensures that your goals are stretched enough to keep you pumped and inspired, but not totally out of whack that you don't know even how to take the first step. Also make sure they are clearly defined and measurable over a specific period of time. We coaches usually recommend setting 3-5 goals for 6 months – so in 6 months what tangible results would you like to have achieved?

Here are a few more tips to make your goals happen:

Shout it from the roof tops—Find someone to share your goals with. A coach is great; a friend or partner will do. Write your goals down and maybe keep a notebook by your bed and get back to them weekly.

Define and Schedule—Each week look at your 5 goals and define one action you are going to do immediately that coming week against each of your focus areas. Take out your calendar and schedule it in NOW.

Turn intention into rituals—Neuroscience proves that habits are impossible to change, they are deep wired into our brain. To create a new habit, we need to wire a new pathway and do the new habit repetitively. Repetition creates ritual. Want to work out more? Make it a ritual at 3 times a week first thing in the morning. Want to become more mindful? Wear a red bracelet to remind you to start every morning with 5 minutes of mindfulness. Want to remember to tell your spouse you love them? I heard about a husband who became endearingly conditioned to tell his wife he loved her by touching his wedding ring as a reminder to do so.

Every voyage starts with a single step—Don't try and do all your goals at once as you will just get discouraged and ditch your plans. Define your first baby step. Once you have successfully achieved this, you can go on to the next one. Define these steps weekly; at the end of the week set a new action plan for the following week. When I attended Tony Robbins' Life Mastery adventure retreat, we had to jump off a telephone pole. As we climbed up, we were asked to focus on one thing only, "What's your next step?". While the goal was to jump, we had to take one step to reach the goal.



Let me share with you another personal example which will hopefully help turn the theory into action and maybe inspire you to get started.

After 20 years of a lucrative corporate career, I decided to leave my job as CMO Asia with a big company and take a leap of faith to dedicate more time to my purpose, which is to inspire and help people grow.

I knew I wanted to create a life that would be grounded in growth, contribution and love-this was my WHY. I wanted to continue self-learning, help others achieve greatness and strengthen important relationships in my life.

And so, in April 2018 I sat down to write my 5 key goals for the next 6 months in line with my why and my vision of an ideal future (I actually made 6 key goals).

- 1. Spiritual Growth** – Turn every ordinary moment to extraordinary through mindful presence. Focus my work 100% toward my purpose, people development, and create a business plan to do so.
- 2. Physical Growth** – Become a SUP (*Stand Up Paddle*) yoga teacher, Exercise 3-4 times a week. Balance my food and reduce sugar as I am pre-diabetic, lose 7kg (15lbs) and maintain this as new base line.
- 3. Intellectual Growth** – Go back to school. Develop a portfolio career working multiple part-time and freelance jobs.
- 4. Relationship Growth** – Spend quality time with my parents, kids, husband and friends.
- 5. Emotional Growth** – Bring daily gratitude and meditation practice into my life.
- 6. Inspire Growth In Others** – Lead women’s empowerment retreats. Give one talk a month minimum for the initial 6 months and start putting my stories and ideas into writing.

By September 2018 (6 months later) here’s what happened:

Spiritual Growth – *I resisted the temptation and offers to go back to the lucrative and safe corporate world and created my own ideal portfolio career combining time to study, speak, teach, train and coach.*

Physical Growth – *I went to a nutritionist, managed to hit the gym 4 times a week and lost the desired 7kg (15lbs). I obtained a SUP yoga teacher diploma. Practiced and taught weekly and started a supplement program to re-balance my sugar.*

Intellectual Growth – *I decided to go back to school to obtain my INSEAD Executive Master's in Change (EMC). I took on an extra stretch, a year-long online Diploma in Happiness Studies (HSA by Tal Ben-Shahar) and increased my reading to 30 minutes a day.*

Relationship Growth – *Pampered my parents with a trip to Japan and the Japanese Alps; spent the longest summer holiday with the kids including the best family road trip ever. For the first time, joined my husband as trailing spouse on his two-week business travel to the US. Spent time at home with my daughter preparing for her Cambridge IGCSE's and I also made a commitment to spend one hour per week minimum alone time with each of my three kids and get back to a weekly date night with hubby.*

Inspire Growth – *Signed up to APSS (Asia Professional Speakers Singapore), gave monthly key notes on my areas of passion, purpose-led leadership and happiness at work. Spoke at the amazing EVE women's empowerment event in Singapore met great role models like Professor Tal Ben Shahar while there. And lastly, I started monthly women's empowerment yacht retreats which not only help inspire growth in the participating ladies but also helps by contributing to an NGO helping women in Sri Lanka open their own micro-businesses, and I took on another major volunteering project by joining TOM (Tikkun Olam Makers) and connecting people with disabilities with the local tech community.*

Quite a lot for 6 months, but it all started from being clear on where I was heading and taking risks on opportunities the universe presented in front of me, as I knew they were in line with my goals.

And finally, research shows that it is not the attainment of your goals which is important as this leads only to a temporary high, it's the journey towards purposeful goals grounded in one's strengths that leads both to prolonged success and happiness. So, be purposeful in setting your goals and enjoy the ride!