

Syllabus: Catching Your Second Wind

Overview

In this individualized course you will receive six half-hour phone sessions and five weeks of reading materials and exercises designed to help you re-vision your life and find new, exciting meaning. This course is designed for women in "midlife" who are looking for support as they move into a new part of their life-cycle. Because a person may identify a readiness for this shift any time between the ages of 30 and 65, "midlife" is defined broadly for our purposes as simply "the middle of life."

This course is not for the faint of heart. To get the most out of it, participants will want to give plenty of attention to each activity and take advantage of the phone consultations/appointments.

Week 1:

Phone meeting #1: This is a half hour conversation to make an introduction and first connection and to talk through what the rest of the process will look like. You will have the chance to articulate your goals and hopes for the next weeks. Cami will keep notes so that she can help you continue to focus on your specific objectives throughout the process.

Reading Materials for Week 2: Answering the Call

Transitions and tragedies are ripe opportunities to embrace life, catch a second wind and sail into exciting territory. Or they can be frightening, dangerous, devastating losses that leave us depressed. If we heed the Call and practice the principles in this course, even difficult and sad circumstances can lead us into deeper, more fulfilling experiences of life and of the self. Because when the Call comes, it knocks us off of our proverbial foundations, it tends to strip away the taken-for-granted beliefs we hold about ourselves. This week you'll first look at how to get ready for the journey you're embarking on. Next, you'll take a glance at some of the things that hold you in your current state of indecision or lethargy and then you'll carefully examine the beliefs you've been carrying around about who you are. Finally, you'll do a powerful exercise which will open your mind to what is to come in the following weeks.

Groundwork:

- Making the Commitment
- Yes, But...
- Identifying Self-stories - problematic and preferred

Phone meeting #2: We'll go over the reading and groundwork and identify the one or two problematic self-stories that are particularly paralyzing (for use in the next week).

Reading Materials for Week 3: Changing Relationship with Our Inner Demons

If we were honest, we'd all be able to identify one or two "tapes" that run in our heads and genuinely disrupt our ability to live out our full potential. If there weren't any barriers to authenticity and self-expression, we would simply transition from one life-cycle stage to the next without any struggle or crisis. There are two basic sorts of barriers. External barriers are all of the things that make living out our potential seem impossible from a practical perspective. Such things include, but are not limited to things like money, time, responsibilities, or lack of training or experience. Internal barriers are the tapes we run in our heads and are related to the problematic plots we identified during our first week. These can be related to our experiences of illness, abuse, personal limitations, trauma, or any number of other things.

This week you'll revisit at least one serious self-story you identified in the previous week and, through an intensive process called "externalization," you'll change your relationship to that particular Inner Demon. This will free you up for the next step: Meeting your Well-Woman.

Groundwork:

- Interview with a Problem

Phone meeting #3: We'll discuss the interview process and, if needed, further interview the problem for insights into how to change relationship with this long-standing internal barrier.

Reading Materials for Week 4: Looking into the Well

The metaphor of a well is an ancient, sacred and lovely way of understanding what aspects of the self have been hidden deep in the subconscious. This week we will look at a couple of ancient stories with regard to the well. Why is it so important to peer into the well (especially at midlife markers) and see our exiled self down there? This exiled self represents our deep and rich inner wisdom. S/he is the image we can return to whenever we feel lost (which we will, at times). S/he has been waiting for us to come and lift her/him out of the deep place and bring her/him to the fresh air at the surface of our lives. It's only fair to bring her/him up; s/he's been down below for so long.

This week is about "preferred identity," or the positive plots identified in the first week's groundwork which now need to be thickened and developed. Since we have opened/are opening our minds and visions of ourselves to new possibilities, we also open to undreamed dreams. Dreams and passions, whether long held or newly developed during transitional periods, are the vehicles, the tools, and the means for catching a second wind and living out our renewed identities. The exercises this week are pivotal. For some people, what will come forward is a dream or passion that is known, but has been submerged. For others, what arises will feel new.

Once we have envisioned the submerged self and articulated what we've seen, it will be time to make a plan. Your ground work this week will include a blueprint created especially to help you map out the steps you need to take to adapt your lifestyle to your vision of self.

Groundwork:

- Visualization and reflection
- Bill of Rights

Phone meeting #4: We'll talk about the visualization and alternative ways to connect to the Well Wisdom. We'll also review the Bill of Rights and discuss how to make these rights operational.

Reading Materials for Week 5: The Action Quest & Garnering Support and Accountability for Your Journey

Now that you've met your Well-Wisdom, you'll want to know how s/he sees your life. This week you're listening for guidance and committing to an "Action Quest."

Once you get guidance, you'll want to garner some support and create some accountability for yourself so that you have what it takes to follow through on the next steps. Support and accountability are not necessarily the same thing. They can definitely overlap, but garnering both from the people around us is critical to the success of redefining ourselves during life transitions. Supporters and accountability partners alike are members of our "community base," without whom we are likely to make very little progress. This week, you will expand your work to include your relationships. Two exercises explore how you will develop both "support" and "accountability" as you heed the Call of the second wind blowing through your life right now.

Groundwork:

- Introductory Blog Exercise
- Collaborative Action Plan

Phone meeting #5: We'll do a review of the your Support/Accountability chart (from the material) and blog exercise. Special attention will be given to the Collaborative Action Plan.

Celebrating and Ritualizing

Memorializing even small changes and movements is a critical aspect of the self re-definition process because it makes change official! This week we'll look at the cycle of the past four weeks and learn how to recognize what sort of shifts, movements and changes you can memorialize (and therefore reiterate). We'll also examine how each of the practices and exercises from the previous weeks can be built into regular, central practices for you and how you can move forward with these tools to guide you into the rest of your life.

Groundwork:

- Celebration and Ritual chart
- Using *Second Wind* Practices All Your Life

Phone meeting #6: Review and closure.