

Introduction

My Mother never taught me how to wear makeup. In fact, when I was about 16, she asked me if I could teach her how to do it.

She sat on my bed one morning while I was getting ready for school. As I applied my black drugstore-brand eyeliner she simpered, “How do you know how to do that?”

“I don’t know, I just do it, Mom!”

(I was really cool about it.)

This was before Michelle Phan and YouTube tutorials, but I made do with what I could find at Barnes and Noble. (Remember when we used to need physical books in order to learn things?)

To tell you the truth, how I learned is a bit of a blur. I remember the part where I was *good* at it more so than the actual learning process. I guess we all would

like to believe we popped out of our Moms with ALL the skills we currently possess; I'm sure I went through many ups and downs, especially where mascara was concerned.

The one thing I never got a handle on, though, was lipstick. I remember stealing my older sister's BRIGHT RED lipstick and applying it in secret. I would wait until no one was home and I could be alone for a while. Afterwards, I would have to scrub it off my face to get all of the color off, which would of course turn my face red from all the scrubbing. (At least I had the illusion that I was hiding it, right?)

I remember being *scared* the first time I looked at myself in the mirror. Kind of like when you discover you've grown boobs, or... other unexpected bodily developments that happen between the ages of twelve and sixteen. It was sort of like, "What? This doesn't belong to me."

I would imagine that most of us have stolen and applied red lipstick in a similar fashion at some point.

Once the time came for me to wear makeup with *permission*, I still didn't attempt to wear lipstick.

Lip gloss, lip shimmer, tinted ChapStick... those were okay. A solid, rich color however, was not going to make it into my Caboodle, nor onto my lips. I had been taught from various scenes in movies and TV shows that there was such a thing as the *wrong* shade of lipstick.

“Oh honey, that lipstick is all wrong for you!”

Hello, fear of failure. Fine. You win! I won't wear lipstick.

I played it safe and added balms and sparkly sheens rather than going for bold. Whenever I'd see another person wearing a deep, powerful shade on their lips I'd sigh and say,

“I wish I could pull that off.”

I wished... but **I wasn't *willing* to give it a try and risk looking stupid.**

Out of a desire to protect myself, I only went in on “sure things.”

It wasn't until I understood that **there are no sure things** that I decided to take the plunge.

And if you hadn't guessed yet... this book ain't about your desire to wear lipstick.

It's about your life.

•

1

Go For Bold

Make the bold choice because YOU say so

You Have Nothing To Lose

I had a coaching client who was perpetually worried about upsetting others. Her life was focused around people pleasing and receiving outside validation. Working together for a few years, I noticed that she came back over and over with the same fears and the same drive to get respect and approval from those around her. This was all veiled in the idea that she wanted to “be excellent” in life. “Striving for excellence in every area” was her goal.

So I asked, “If you were the last human being on the planet, what would excellence look like? How would it show up in your day to day life?”

She paused for a long while to ponder this.

“Well, I guess I’d go exploring.”

“To find food and water?”

“No, I wouldn’t just be worried about survival, that’s boring! I’d want to experience cool things, and to learn and grow. I’ve always wanted to learn how to surf. I could do that! I could learn all of the things I haven’t learned but want to learn.”

“But who would you be doing it for if there’s no one around?”

“I guess... I’d be doing it for myself.”

“So what’s really different about this imaginary world where you’re the last person alive? How is it different than your life as it is right now?”

“Well, in that world I’d have nothing to lose.”

We have so much to lose in this life.

If I make more money, I could lose it. If I find new friends, there’s more risk of losing people and being disappointed. I’d rather become “happy” with my current level of income and friends. I’ll even

*convince myself I don't need more. The less I HAVE
the less I can LOSE.*

Now, this sounds like a grim existence when you write it out like that, but it's how most of us live our lives.

Head down
Headphones in
Safe
Secure

But we crave more, don't we?

I've never met anyone who didn't want more of something. The thing is, most of us aren't willing to risk.

[Tweet this!](#)

“Why risk it?”

Why put myself on the chopping block and be exposed when I could just as easily coast through this life? As a full time life coach and leadership trainer, I've noticed that most people know what they are against, but they haven't thought much about what they are FOR. This creates a life in which you are running away from experiences rather than toward them.

It's not risky, it's certain.

You know how things are going to go, and you will do what it takes to control, manage and manipulate your circumstances in order to remain certain.

Certainty is one of our fundamental human needs. Certainty is also based in **survival**.

Makes sense, right? If we Delorean'd back to cave man times, we'd put a pretty high value on certainty. We

would quite literally be looking to survive life. But time machines don't exist (yet) and we aren't cave men. These days, we have what we need to be safe and comfortable, and yet we still behave like there are saber tooth tigers waiting just around the bend.

We simply don't have a **strong enough** reason to do it any differently.

Yet.

Scary Stories

I used to love telling scary stories at sleepovers. I had a few books whose covers held promises of chills and shrieks should you choose to delve into their pages. I remember huddling in a circle with my friends, surrounded by sodas, sugary snacks and cuddled up in blankets, we'd take turns reading from these books. We would gasp and scream in unison as the twists and turns of the story jolted us this way and that. Thrilling and terrifying all at once.

We all love a bit of thrill in our lives. We complain about being “bored” and seek to remedy it. We seek out excitement. Truly, we've never had more opportunities for excitement than we do in today's culture of Netflix binging and instant-gratification **everything**.

Consequently, we're well practiced at creating drama just to experience a hit of excitement. We're good at making things more significant than they actually are. We're good at being scared of not much of anything.

I do an exercise with first time clients at the start of any

coaching relationship. Part of the conversation requires that they hang up with me and go make a few phone calls to people in their life to ask a question. Without fail, everyone has this moment of complete and utter DREAD when I introduce this part.

“You mean I need to go and do this right now?”

I get it. I had the exact same reaction when I did this exercise with a coach.

Here’s the key part, though...

Without fail, they all come back and say, “Wow, that wasn’t nearly as bad as I thought it was going to be!”

It always makes me smile. Of course it wasn’t as bad as you THOUGHT it would be. You are well practiced at coming up with scary stories about how things are going to go.

As human beings (and former cave men) we have what is called a Negativity Bias. We remember the bad things (i.e.- the things we should avoid in future, lest we be eaten alive) For example: the tigers live a mile down the path on the left, so always go to the right. Done.

This is a useful skill to have in life threatening situations!

It's not as useful when contemplating writing your novel or starting your business.

Note:

Throughout this book, I'll occasionally insert exercises to take on in the moment. They will be labeled

“Caboodle Time!”

I had the thought to call these “Toolbox Time” before I remembered that this book is themed with lipstick, not hammers. For those of you who don't know what a Caboodle is, I am so sorry you missed out on this 90's fad and please do a Google image search now. I owned a fabulously hot pink one of these babies when I was a tiny human and it served me well. May these brief exercises do the same for you.

Why Be Bold?

When I speak about being bold, I am not referring to being foolhardy, irresponsible, or reckless. In other words, your boldness isn't for the sake of boldness, it's FOR something.

Caboodle Time!

What are you FOR?

It may help to begin with what you are against, just to get those thoughts cleared out of your space. Grab a notebook or a piece of paper and complete the following:

List 5 things you are against in this world:

Ex: war, racism, bullying, shark week

Great, now that that's out of the way...

List 5 things that you are FOR in this world:

Try **not** to simply make them the opposite of your first list

Nice work! I suggest hanging the second list somewhere in your space. Your list is uniquely yours and it points us toward what your overall purpose on the planet is. That sounds like a grandiose concept, I know, but perhaps it's simpler than it sounds.

Every one of us has a purpose

The environment you were born into (your family, your location, your body, etc) determines your perspective on life. That list of things you are against was surely generated based on all of your past experiences. Times you were wronged or saw others being wronged. Things you wish were different so that you could have gotten your needs met. Hopes you have for others to be happier.

Have you ever tried to walk forward while having your head turned behind you?

If not, get up and try it right now. You can't go many steps without stumbling to the side. That, or you need to walk very slowly in order to avoid bumping into something.

Consider that living your life based on what you are against is exactly like this.

Clear on what you don't want, you walk slowly and fearfully toward and unknown future. Plus, it kind of

hurts your neck to always be looking backwards.

Can you see how this is what we're all doing? We're hung up on and still hurt by things that happened many years ago. We hang on to old memories and past pain and allow it to impact our perceptions today. We become so busy checking to make sure there isn't a monster following us that we don't even consider what we want to move towards.

And just because your purpose in life isn't immediately apparent to you does not mean that you do not have one.

Everyone has one. In order to discover and choose it, however, you need to turn your head forward from now on. Become less interested in what happened, and more interested in what you say happens next. This is your story, and it need not be a scary one in order to be exciting and fulfilling. I hope you're beginning to see the answer to "why?" at this point. Now, let's explore the consequences of living a life on purpose.

Consequences

Do you notice how everything in life has a consequence?

We often equate “consequence” with “bad” - but truly we’re just talking about cause and effect.

I eat food and have energy.

I eat food and get a stomachache.

I eat food and feel comforted.

I eat food and....

It doesn’t really matter, there’s simply a consequence. So, what are the consequences of being bold? Of living a life on purpose and FOR something?

This is the third eBook I have written and sold. I’ve used the same model each time, and while it always makes me nervous to do it, I still firmly believe in my intention. See, most eBooks out there are free. Others are \$3.99 or perhaps \$10.

Selling an eBook for \$20 is ridiculous. I would

absolutely balk at that price, myself. So why do it?

Here's my logic:

I have downloaded so many free ebooks that I have lost count. I've also downloaded some at \$3.99 or perhaps a bit more. How many of those have I read?

ZERO.

They simply join the ever-growing cemetery of free or inexpensive content on my hard drive, waiting for its day of deletion.

I'm not interested in having this book die on your hard drive. I actually want you to read it.

Now, I can't guarantee that everyone who purchases this book will read it. However, I can be sure that anyone who doesn't intend to read it will not.

I'm only looking at my overarching purpose here: to change the lives of people who want to be more self-expressed and get everything they want in life.

This comes with consequences.

I've received ample criticism from folks who have come across my eBooks over the years. "How dare you charge this much for an eBook" and similar comments.

I've toiled over the choice myself, fighting my own inner critic that loves to tell me The Tale of the Foolish eAuthor who thought she was good enough to sell a book! BWAHAHAHA <- that's an evil laugh, just to be clear

On the flip side, I have also received amazing messages from readers:

"I just got done reading your book and WOW, I wasn't sure about paying \$20 for an eBook but now that I've read it I can say that I would have paid way more if I had known what value I would have gotten from it!"

Any time someone asks me what my thought process was behind pricing my book, it gives me a chance to express my desire to make an impact. And people always ask. Each time someone asks, I get to share my message.

The consequences are both good and bad, and I'm willing to choose the bad ones in service of the good ones.

Caboodle Time!

Take that list of 5 things you are FOR and list the consequences (good and bad) of each.

What do you notice?

Often, we look at the pros and cons of a situation and pick the option with more pros. But what if you chose the cons as well?

Can you see how, in my example, I **CHOSE** to receive negative feedback? When it came, I expected and welcomed it.

To be clear, *at first* it felt like my greatest fear being realized.

I later got clear on the fact that I could expect and welcome these messages, because they just meant I was doing what I said I would do: polarizing the people who would not read my book anyway.

In order to pay \$20 for an eBook, you have to believe in something. In order to read a book, you have to believe in something. In order to get value from a book you read, you have to be willing to invest time in implementing the ideas. If you're not willing to invest money, chances are you're not willing to invest time either.

I am choosing the consequence of potentially being polarizing. Since I'm choosing that, those messages need not hurt me. I have asked for them, and so it's fine with me if people send them to me.

Being clear on what you're choosing is everything.

Brazen to Brave

This is why I ask what you are here FOR. What do you stand for. What impact will you have on this planet? Because it has to be FOR something. Standing FOR something requires bravery.

Otherwise, we are simply being brazen, which is not the same as being brave.

“And maybe it wasn’t that brave so much as brazen, **but it got me through...**”

-Esthero

Many times, brazen is required at first. “Fake it till you make it” - but it will not garner you the results you wish to see. It will, however, bring you to the precipice of a metaphorical cliff, and you will then have the choice of jumping... or not.

I’ll never forget my first experience on a roller coaster. I was a brazen little girl. I wanted to look cool

in the eyes of the adults that brought me to the amusement park. Of course I want to ride the big roller coasters! I had no idea what I was getting myself into.

I rode the “Runaway Train” with my eyes clenched tightly shut, cowering into my lap bar for dear life. It was horrible. In later years, I learned that all you need to do is let go your grip and experience the feeling of flying. That’s why we ride coasters. When I was doing it for my ego, it was terrifying. When I was doing it for ME and my experience, it was full on freedom like I had never experienced.

Brazen led me to brave. It led me to this experience of freedom I didn’t even know was possible.

Finding Your Bold Vision

Perhaps being brazen is the path to discovering your bold vision. I can think of countless examples in my own life of being very brazen, perhaps not even knowing what I was doing, and having it lead me to more clarity.

“Clarity comes from engagement,
not thought.”

–[Marie Forleo](#)

My first solo YouTube channel was called [Fart with Headphones on](#). Based on an actual experience I had of farting in public while wearing headphones. I couldn't hear it because of the music playing in my ears, so I had no idea if it had made a sound. I looked around to check the faces of people nearby me on the subway platform. Were they looking at me? Were they laughing?

And then I realized... who cares? [It doesn't matter](#).
Subway platform epiphany!

I made a note of this “fart with headphones on” concept and later used the idea for all of my social media accounts. My viewers/readers even called themselves “farts.” It was a lot fun.

I blogged about my life, I gave unsolicited advice to random teenagers on tumblr, and after I gained a name for myself, people started reaching out to me with specific questions.

I was like Dear Abby, but with fart jokes.

I kept the name for a few years, until I eventually outgrew it. This coincided with my marriage and last name change. I shed the FWHO title and became simply “Michelle Akin” on all of my accounts. I struggled a lot with who I was without that goofy name. What would my content be? Would I still incorporate silliness? Did this mean I had to be boring from now on? What would my audience think?

It was pretty nerve wracking.

Since I already had a lot of eyes on me, every time I changed my logo or video schedule, people had comments and reactions.

And I kept changing my mind! I kept trying things out and then taking the comments too much to heart. I felt embarrassed for continuously changing my mind. I still get embarrassed sometimes when I think about it.

But even as I write this book and remark upon the look and feel of my current website and branding, I'm more and more assured that this IS the way to finding your vision.

Choose something.

Go with it, full on.

If it changes for you, then change it.

This is why we need not ever be afraid of making the wrong choice. Eventually, your initial choice will no longer resonate with you. That will absolutely happen. So we have nothing to fear, do we?

Your vision need not be perfect.
It is something to craft over time.

Nothing we create is ever “done” - we simply choose to stop working on it. Your vision is quite literally “the view from here.” From where you currently stand, what do you see and what do you say?

Visioning is not about what is realistic. It is accessing that part of us that we used to have SO much more access to. As children, we were limitless in imagination. Guess what? You still are.

So take a deep breath and allow yourself to be a child about this.

Who are you and what do you want to see in the world that isn't currently there?

Reminder: you don't need to know how to achieve this yet.

Overcoming Fears

When we get present to a big vision, fear creeps in. It's already been creeping in as you've been reading. It disguises itself in clever ways. It shows up as "realistic" and "Impossible" and "What if..."

Predicting catastrophe and impossibility is no longer your job. You are fired. ([Tweet this!](#))

If you are moving towards something worthwhile, you will experience fear.

I offer you a reframe on the concept of fear that is a recent revelation of mine:

Fear is just excitement that we don't yet understand.

We have labeled it fear. If you think about it, though, it's just our subconscious getting present to **possibility** and then finding **roadblocks**. By why was it walking down the road at all?

The funny thing is, if you really thought it wasn't possible you wouldn't be talking about the roadblocks. You wouldn't be on the road. You wouldn't even conceive of the road. The FACT that you do think about "what would get in my way" is simply evidence that you do believe the vision to be possible.

Consider that deep down, **you are simply excited for what is possible.**

Caboodle Time!

When your heart beats hard, feel it, breathe with it, and try labeling it as excitement.

Smile. Laugh to yourself. Your heart is excited.

^Write this out to remind yourself^

This takes practice. Lots of practice. You've spent a long time telling yourself that you're scared and relating to your fast beating heart as evidence of fear.

Try evidence of excitement instead, and see how it shifts your viewpoint over time.

Is Bold *Best*?

Of course not. I'm not suggesting that you must be bold. I'm simply suggesting that you CAN be. Not everyone is cut out for leadership. Not everyone is going to go get permission to be bold.

But if you're reading this, there is a high likelihood that you ARE cut out for it, and it IS your path to take. We will explore this concept of being a leader in more detail. We will look at what it takes and why you would.

But first, let's talk about getting naked...