

111. How to change any area of your life you're not happy with

Vanessa 00:00

Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

Hello, friends, welcome back to the podcast. Today we are talking about how to change any area of your life that you're not happy with. And I am so excited to bring you this topic. Because in my own life experience and in working with all my students, I have come to understand over and over again, that so many of us feel disempowered to change certain aspects of our life that we're not happy with. We think we can't, we think it's impossible, or we think we don't deserve it. And that is bananas. And so what I'm going to do today is I'm going to walk you through a step-by-step process to show you exactly how to do it.

But first is a story. So where did the idea for this podcast come from? So we just finished a big cross-country move. So if you've been listening along, you know that we just picked up our lives from California and move them to Atlanta, Georgia, and are super excited to be here. Our house is beautiful. We love our new community in our neighborhood. And we're so excited to dive in. We literally just landed a few days ago here. In fact, I'm recording from a small little room that seems to have the best acoustics so far in this house. But the point is this, that my husband and I, you know, we followed sort of that traditional trajectory of going to school, buying a home having kids. And we got to a point in our lives where we realized we weren't necessarily happy with certain aspects. And we wanted to change something up, we wanted a new adventure. And so we decided to move across the country. And we were really thoughtful about the decision.

If you'll indulge me a little bit, I'll share how silly we weren't and how thoughtful we were, we didn't just decide one day and wake up and say, yep, we're going to do it, we woke up and said we're gonna do it. But let's think really intentionally about what we want in the New City where we live. And so we listed out an entire list of all the things we cared about in the city where we want to live. And then we started picking out cities that we thought met that criteria, and we created a whole matrix in Excel. For those data nerds out there, you would love this Excel spreadsheet. And then we started visiting some of the cities. And when we would visit the cities, we met with realtors, and we started exiting out some of the cities that really just didn't meet our criteria, or the energy or the vibe didn't really feel right. And Atlanta made it to the top of the list. And we're here and we absolutely love it. So we're really, really happy to be here. And you know, I share that with you. Because one, it's just really exciting. And I'm really proud of us for being so brave, to pick up our lives and move not because we were being called for a job, which is kind of a traditional reason people move, not because we were moving to be your family.

Another reason why people move, we did it simply because we wanted a new adventure in life. We wanted to experience something different. And we really were excited to try something new. And very few people pick up their lives and reroute themselves somewhere else for that purpose. It's different when you're younger, you know, my husband and I had a lot of these conversations, because before we had gotten married, even after we got married, but before we had kids, we traveled and lived all over the country all over the world, really. And when we started having kids, you know, we were sort of fed this idea, which I'm sure will sound familiar to you, which is you buy a home, you have this 30-year mortgage, you raise your kids in one area, and you stay there until your kids grow up and move out. And then you essentially retire and most people just stay in that area. And that was just not our jam.

And I remember when we signed our 30-year mortgage, I remember I had this feeling like oh my gosh, is this it I kind of felt a little uncomfortable, a little almost trapped. I remember thinking and I remember sort of thinking, Alright, well, there's got to be other things we can do to meet this need that we have of experiencing life. And so that's sort of what brings me to this conversation today. Because, you know, it's not just possible for us, it's possible for anyone to find that area of your life where you're not reaching or achieving the results that you want in that life and change it. So that's what we're going to talk about today.

So the very first thing I want to share with all of you is that you are the only person that sets the rules for your life. No one else sets the rules for your life, you set the rules for your life. So what do I mean by that? So I sort of chatted about this a second ago, but most of us grow up believing that we go through life, following a specific pattern, right? You depending on how you have raised in the community you were raised in, it's follows something like this, you go to school, you get a good job, you get married, you buy a home, you contribute to your 401 K, you have kids, you work until you retire sometime in the mid-60s. And if you're lucky, you have saved enough money so that you can travel while you're retired. That is sort of the trajectory that most of us follow. And the truth is this, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that trajectory.

There's nothing wrong with that sequence of events. Especially if that's how you choose to live your life. And this is what I want to start with. What I want to start with is I want you and this is my invitation to you to start to look at every area of your life and choose that area intentionally. So what do I mean by that? I mean that if that is the sequence of events, you want to follow, great, but don't do it. Just because you think that's what you're supposed to do. Do it because that's what you really want to do. Do it because that's what's calling you do it because that is what feels right to you. And really question why? Why does it feel right to me? Again, for me, it didn't feel right, that entire sequence of events, it didn't feel right to me. And I thought that we just had to do it. I thought that that was what I was supposed to do.

I thought that I couldn't pick up and move. And, you know, I really had to sit in question all those ideas and beliefs, and really undo a bunch of programming that I had in my brain, for me to have the courage to do something different. And I'm so happy that I did. Okay, so the second thing I want to share with you is this. The second thing I want to share with you is that your life is not static, it's not set, it's malleable. You can change your life, you can change any part of your life that you're not healthy with. So if there are results in your life where you're not happy, you can change them. So again, the first thing

I shared is that you set the rules for your life, no one else sets them not society, not your friends, not your parents, not your boss, nobody else sets the rules for your life you do you choose the things that feel right to you choose your life intentionally.

The second thing is that your life is not static, your life is malleable, and you can actually change your life. Alright, so I'm going to walk you through a process now to show you how. So the very first thing I want you to do, if you want to walk through this process with me, you can pause this right now and go grab a piece of paper or journal. And I want you to write this out. Okay, it's a few journaling prompts for you. So the first thing I want you to do is take stock of your life. So this is step one, you're going to just take stock of your life. So I'm going to list out a bunch of different domains. And whichever one sort of makes sense to you resonate with you matters to you, you choose those out and you list them out. So a few that actually matter to a lot of people are things like health, like their physical health. Another one is the relationship with money, how they deal with money, do they save it? Do they invest it? Another one is friendships. Another big one is career Am I happy with my career, relationships, my business, if you're an entrepreneur, family, spirituality, or the community you're building around you? And if I've missed any, you put them in there. But choose one of those domains that I listed or come up with your own if you have your own. And I want you just to create a list of the things that matter to you.

These are just kind of big buckets of your life that matter to you. And now when you have that list, go ahead and do it. Pause this if you need to. And when you have that list, I want you to come back. And I want you to look at that list and answer these questions. What's your current relationship with that area of your life? Are you happy with that area of your life? If you were to rate each one of those areas of your life on a scale of one to 1010 being the highest? How would you rate each one? How would you rate each one of those? And I want you to list out why? Why are you reading at the number that you're reading? Okay, so that's step one. So go ahead and pause this and do that for yourself if you want to. And then let's go to step two.

Now for Step Two, what I want you to do is I want you to just be clear on your reasons. Be clear on your why. Check your reasons for why you're doing the things you're doing. Really ask yourself. Why am I doing this? Why is this my relationship? What have I been thinking? Thinking about myself, what have I been believing that's gotten me here? For most of you, for example, if you're at a weight goal that you're not happy with, and you want to change that up, you might believe that it's impossible, that you'll never reach that, that that's just not who you are. You might have thoughts, like, you're just really bad with food. If it's something like a project you really want to complete, you might just have a belief that you're a procrastinator, you never finish things on time you don't follow through. So get really clear as to why your relationship is the way it is. And why. Okay, so once you do that, we're gonna go on to step three.

And in step three, what I want you to do is I want you to go back to that list that you wrote in step one, and I want you to write out what would make each one of these 10? What would your ideal situation be? What would make each one of these 10? And I want you to dream really big here take this as an opportunity to dream big, like, what is your ideal relationship with health? What does your ideal relationship like a loving, personal relationship look like? What does your ideal friendship look like? And get really clear and write that out? What is your ideal relationship with money look like? And you want

to get really clear and really visualize what attending is. And the reason why is, you're not going to be able to create anything new until you actually can see that it's possible. So visualization is a really powerful science back tool to allow you to create a new result in your life. And here again, I want you to dream big, no one is going to tell you that it's impossible, that it's silly, or that it's unrealistic. The only person that might say that to you is your own inner critic, your ego.

So get really clear. If you're hesitating to come up with 10s. If you're hesitating, Why are you hesitating? What's stopping you from his from actually coming up with a 10? And just give that part of you a lot of love right now and let that part of you know, it's okay, that it's safe, that you're gonna go ahead and train big anyway. So go ahead and create really big 10s Here, what would attend be? What would that look like? Now, when you're doing that a few of those things that might come up for you are, you know, but I can't have 10s in all areas of my life, that's impossible. Or that's unrealistic. Or I'm supposed to be struggling with this part of my life, a lot of us believe that there are certain areas of our life that we will always struggle with, maybe it's relationships, for you, maybe it's weight, maybe it's money. But what if that wasn't true? What if you didn't have to struggle with any area of your life, what if every area of your life can be a 10?

Another thing that might come up for you is that you need to choose a more realistic goal, or that you don't deserve to have a 10 in a specific area of your life that you don't deserve it. So if any of this is coming up for you, I want to let you know that I am holding space for you and that I see you. And I completely understand, I completely understand I used to have a lot of those same thoughts that I don't deserve a 10 in all areas of my life, or that they shouldn't all be 10s that some parts should just be hard that I should have to work hard for certain things. And again, this isn't saying that you're not going to have to put action into it that you're not going to have to do some work to achieve that. 10 just means that you can have that 10 And you shouldn't shortchange yourself. If you are shortchanging yourself right now, just notice that you are the only person doing that no one else is limiting you except you. Okay, so once you go ahead and do that, I want to share something else with you. I want to share with you as you're looking at all this, that this is actually possible that you can choose this area, these these 10s and you can create that for you.

Because you're not broken. Because you know, you're not bad with money, if that's a belief that you have. You're not just a procrastinator, if that's a belief you have, you don't just follow through, you might have these thoughts, that you are just really horrible when it comes to exercising, those are all just thoughts, thoughts that you've been saying to yourself over and over again, and the thoughts that you've been practicing. That's what becomes a reality. And the more you practice a thought, the more true it feels. So if you're experiencing those thoughts now and you're like, well, that's just the truth. That's what it is. It's only because you've been practicing that thought, it's not because it's really true. You know, I used to have a lot of unintentional thoughts like that, and they were not giving me the result I wanted in my life. And so I started thinking differently. So the thoughts that you think on default, all the thoughts that have gotten you to where you are right now the thoughts that you think on default without questioning them.

Those are unintentional thoughts, creating unintentional results for your life. And the way to flip that is to start thinking intentionally which is what this exercise allows you to do. It allows you to start things

intentionally about all these areas of life so you can create intentional results. Okay, so you did step one, which is you took stock of areas of all those areas of your life. Step two, you checked your reasons why step three, you went back and listed what a 10 would look like. And now we're going to do step four. And step four, what you're going to do is I want you to choose one of those areas of your life, just one, just choose one area right now, choose one area you want to start working on right now. And it doesn't have to be a massive change. It doesn't have to be massive to be valid. So if you're like the old me, I would have chosen the one thing that I thought I was the worst at just to go all in just to make it harder for myself.

Because I used to believe that to succeed, things had to be hard, I had to work really hard. So it doesn't have to be massive to be valid. Just choose one area of your life. And all you need to do is make sure that it's an intentional choice, whatever you're choosing, make sure it's intentional. Now what I want you to do is when you think about that situation, when you see what it is now. And then you see what it would be when it was a 10 when it becomes a 10. I want you to answer these questions. How does that make me feel? How does it feel when it's a 10? When do you actually visualize yourself with that area of your life as a 10? How does that feel? So I'll give you an example. So for me, I used to believe that all marriages ended in divorce, if you've been following this podcast, you've heard me say that before. And when my husband and I met and fell in love, I thought we would just Live Forever together, but never get married because I thought marriage was pointless and that it would just end in divorce. And he had a very different life experience. And so for him, it was really important to be married. And so I had to do a lot of the same thought work.

You know, first I did a lot of therapy to get over all the trauma that I experienced. And then I had to, after we were married, we've been together for 15 years now. And married for 10. And after we were married for a few years, I had to go back and do a lot of the same work that I'm teaching all of you, for me to get over all of those same thoughts that I still had that I thought I had, I had overcome, but some of those thoughts were still there. So when I thought about what would attend look like in my marriage, it was really beautiful. It was really blissful. There was a lot of joy, there was a lot of laughter, there was a lot of trust, and happiness, and there was a lot of coming together just to have fun. There was you know, partnership there was lifting each other up there was challenging each other there was supporting each other to be our best selves. That's what a 10 looked like for me. And I got really clear and I created this vision. That's what a 10 is for me. And then I did this and this is what I want all of you to do I want you to put yourself again in that situation and ask yourself, How does this situation make me feel and come up with those feelings? When you're in that? 10? What does that 10 Make you feel like? For me, it made me feel full of joy and made me feel expansive.

It made me feel really proud of myself really proud of us for doing this together. So how does that 10 Make you feel? And the reason we start with feelings is that feelings are a roadmap to help us create the results we want in our lives. Feelings are a roadmap when you lean into those feelings that sort of propel you forward. expansiveness, peace, joy, pride, those feelings are what's going to help you create that reality. You start really feeling those feelings. And that's how you create that reality. Okay, so you stepped into that 10 You felt like what it would feel like when it becomes real. And now what I want you to do is I want you to come up with a list right now of three things, three small actions that you can do this week, to create that feeling for yourself. What are you going to do to create through that 10 start

taking steps towards that 10. And all of the steps you take are helping you really realize that feeling, they're helping me create that sense of pride.

This is going to help me feel really proud of myself, this is going to help me feel at peace, and this is going to help me create more joy. So come up with a list of three things that you can do today that you can do this week that really help you achieve that 10. And step by step help you create that feeling. So for example, maybe your ideal situation is to finish a grant proposal or finish the next chapter of a book that you're writing. And the feeling that is associated with you when you actually reach that 10 Which are you submit that grant proposal or you finish your book is pride, or it's like, feels just like so peaceful like I'm finally done. And so maybe the small action that you said today is to set a 20-minute 20 minutes aside today to just write uninterrupted.

Today I'm just going to create 20 minutes, a block of 20 minutes to write uninterrupted, And notice how I chose a small action. I didn't say set a block of two hours or four hours or an hour, I said, Do something small that you can do today, choose this one small action today on purpose. Because it doesn't have to be something big or massive, it just has to do it just has to be something to get you in motion. Because if you guys remember, Newton's law, an object in motion stays in motion, and an object at rest stays at rest. So when you choose the small actions, it'll help you start taking those actions that you need, it'll get you in motion, it'll get you in motion to start achieving those feelings that you want to feel to create that 10 in that area of your life.

So I want you to do that now, create that list, figure out what that would be for you, and start blocking out that time this week to get that done for yourself. Because friends, when you live a life of intention, when you live a life on purpose, instead of on default, you get to create magic in all areas of your life. It's really beautiful. All of the areas of your life can be that 10 can be those 10s that you listed. And the beautiful thing is that when you achieve those 10s, you might realize that now you want to do something different. Now your 10 looks different. And now you create a different vision for yourself. And that is how you keep expanding all of the time into a better version of yourself.

That is how you continue to live a life that you can be proud of a life where you will look back and be so happy that you chose to not stay small to not believe the lies that it's impossible for you and that you don't deserve it because those are just lies. All of that is not true. You deserve to live a life that you have that you're happy with that you're proud of and that you love. You can do that for yourself today. Okay, see friends go out to make magic and I will see you next week adios.

Hey sweet friends. If you love what you're learning, then you've got to join us on the journey. It's my all-inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us at Vanessacalderonmd.com/join. I'll see you there.