

Let Your Feet Find the Focus

The other day I went for a run on my favorite local trail in a beautiful county park. I just love being in nature, breathing that fresh air, seeing all those colors, hearing animals scurrying or the creek babbling.

I also love the challenge that the trail presents. Navigation in the woods requires a much more alert mind. You have to really pay attention so that you don't trip. Jumping over curbs is one thing when running outside, but constantly scanning for roots or fallen branches is something else in the woods.

What's the beauty of that? My mind HAS to focus on what's ahead on the ground, which means it gets a break from thinking the squirrely thoughts it normally does all day long. The kind of break that meditation provides. Trail running is moving meditation? Indeed!

Besides the physical aspect of the run, which in the end always makes my body feel more relaxed, being so close to natural elements provides a release that no medicine can. I can go in feeling down and by the end I'll be back to positive.

But let me tell you, I've had some tumbles on the trail. Fortunately it doesn't happen often. Once you fall the first time, you realize: YOU ARE NOT INVINCIBLE! You are perfectly human.

I'd been running on the trails for a couple years before I fell the first time. It was during a 12.5K race, which I hadn't trained for very well. I was tired that morning, and I had neglected my pre-race nutrition.

I knew I wasn't in top form for the race, but it is an annual one I do and I was determined to give it my best.

I stepped to the start line with eager anticipation, believing I would do great.

Half way through the race I realized I was running on empty, with no fuel or water in my belt.

My mind started to move away from the trail and onto the path of monkey mind... how far away is the fuel station? How is my time compared to last year? Why don't my legs move faster? There were probably 100 other questions I asked myself and considered the answers to.

Probably my mind should have been on the ground three feet ahead, but it was wandering widely.

With all this build up, you won't be surprised that I fell three times during that race. Each time I grew more humiliated. Then, worse, I started to feel sorry for myself. How could I not fall with all the negative reaction going on?

I basically lost my confidence and drive to finish the race. I allowed myself to walk in sections, I beat myself up mentally. For a while. Fortunately with about a mile left in the race, I started to look at the ground in front of me.

I pleaded with my feet to pick themselves up higher.

And then something magic happened: I didn't fall again!

I started to feel so grateful that I didn't quit. That despite the dirt on my hands and the bloody scrapes on my legs, I had the power to complete this journey. That gratitude got me to the finish line and has stayed with me since that race day.

Cut to my trail run the other day. I've been training well lately and when I started out I was feeling good. I was grateful to be in the park, and was ready for the run.

Then, you guessed it: My mind went wandering away from the roots and branches onto something else and, boom, I went down. Sometimes it isn't the physical pain that causes the trauma. In this case, since I hadn't fallen for so long, I was startled to find myself sprawled out with dirt under my fingernails.

Determined, I brushed myself off, and carefully proceeded. About 20 minutes later the second fall came. By that time I had stopped shaking from the traumatic fall earlier, and was feeling good about the run again. Great, in fact, and as we

were heading toward the end of the run, I picked up speed. I was proudly thinking about how I was actually achieving a negative split. In that moment, I tripped again and fell. Surprised?

When we allow our mind to waiver, our body follows along.

Trail running isn't for everyone, but trails can be used as an analogy for many challenges.

Know that you will fall sometimes, be prepared to pick yourself up, and, when you get back on the trail, remember to keep your mind focused. On whatever is right for that moment.

Don't judge the thoughts and gently remind yourself that the obstacles on your path are there to keep you focused on where you are going.

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Making Decisions with Positive Awareness

Have you ever caught yourself not being able to make a decision?

You waffle back and forth, weighing the options, unsure what is the best way to go? Sometimes the hesitation is due to a limiting belief such as a lack of confidence that you will be able to achieve what you want to do, sometimes you aren't sure you are worth the financial investment, sometimes you are just plain tired and don't want to do anything, let alone make a decision.

The decision could be as small as what to cook for dinner, or huge such as deciding whether or not to leave your miserable job.

No matter your inner struggle when (not) making a decision, the issue I want to address is what that (in)action does to the final outcome. Let's use Lynn as our example. This 40-something mom of two works full time, as does her husband.

Lynn really likes writing, and feels there is a fiction book in her, she even has the general story line mapped out. She learns about a 12-week fiction writing class offered at her local university's continuing education department – for only \$129!

When she first opens the university's email, she is instantly excited, thinking, "this is it, finally my big chance to write my book!!" And then she gets busy with work or life or family. Later that evening she tells her husband about it. He encourages her, even though their finances are tight, as he sees his wife sparkle as she talks about it.

Lynn, however, has grown more skeptical over the 6 hours since

she first read the course offering. As she drifts off to sleep, she starts making excuses why she shouldn't attend it. Tuesday night is Susie's piano lesson, who will take her? That \$129 *should* really toward their growing credit card debt. Lynn even starts to think she probably wouldn't write a good enough book to even make her time worth it.

That's a lot of skeptical, am I right? Can you relate at all to Lynn's story?

The next several days, Lynn continues to think about the class. She does some research on the teacher. She looks into other fiction classes offered online as a sort of price comparison. She talks about it to friends, reviewing her hesitations over and over.

All the while, Lynn is very excited about the chance to take the class, she just isn't sure yet if she should commit.

A full week after she first learns about the class, Lynn decides to just go for it. She pays the \$129 and she is very excited, if a little hesitant.

So here Lynn is... 7 days later signing up to do what she wanted to do in the first place. Lynn is ready for a transformation. But you might not believe it. She's spent no less than 8 hours talking about and thinking over if she should take the class, which was basically 8 hours reviewing her inadequacies and limitations – to herself and to others.

Lynn could have been spending 8 hours writing out the outline of the book. That 8 hours could have gone to sleeping, exercising, meditating, spending time with her kiddos, talking to her friends about how great her book will be, what it will be about, etc.

Besides missing out on those productive 8 hours, she spent 8 hours reinforcing negative beliefs. This is the opposite of what we want. We want POSITIVE in our life! This is basic Law

of Attraction stuff here.

We are (rightly) encouraged to embrace saying yes to opportunities that will challenge us and open up our creative powers. But sometimes opportunities come at the “wrong” time in that the answer isn’t always clear.

What I hope you will consider and take away from this is not that you have to rush decisions, but be cognizant of how your mind is operating during the time of decision. If you go into limiting beliefs, or self doubt, or easy-out excuses about something you really have excitement for, you aren’t allowing YOURSELF to grow.

My advice is to just say NO when you get to that place. Ideally say NO to the negative thoughts, but if you can’t, then just say NO to the opportunity and move on. Keep your thoughts positive. Especially your SELF thoughts. This is the most important thing.

The next most important thing is to save yourself the time and headache of wasting that precious time.

If a similar opportunity comes up for you, something great, but you just aren’t sure... Go ahead and take your time, but please do so mindfully. If it is bringing up negative thoughts, then just say NO! If you can manage it, try to envision how wonderful you will feel after having participated in the transformative opportunity.

Absolutely keep yourself open to grow and to challenge yourself. Say yes to opportunities. But be ready to say no to others. Keep as positive as you can... for your health and your own .

Trust Your Future Self

I'm wondering lately why we are prone to negative self-talk. It seems almost ingrained in our nature. It doesn't help to recognize that we are surrounded by negativity: judgement, resentment, jealousy, anger, and more, are abundant everywhere. We hear a couple negative things from others and the mind can't help but react with additional negative thoughts. It is a pattern. A habit. A way of life that we've known for too long. It is important to take time *daily* to remind our mind to stay on track and not get distracted by the "thoughts" we are trying to get our self to believe. "You aren't good enough." "You're lazy." "You're so stupid."

It is easy enough to say, "I am confident and am not bothered by what other people think of me." Or, "I love myself and am full of confidence." But it is easier to think: "Yeah, right, I'll just stop being bothered by what people are thinking about me, and I'll do it starting [snaps fingers] now. Oh, and I'll go ahead and just ignore the bashing I do on myself while I'm at it."

You can say your affirmation, but not really believe it. It takes time and commitment to change a habit, but if you put focus into this idea every day for a couple of weeks, you'll be surprised how much better your thought-reactions can be!

I'd like to share a tip with you about building belief behind your affirmation.

Do you ever think about your future self? You know, the person you are striving to become on your transformational journey? Let me tell you something, she's really amazing! She's got her mindset clear and is radiating her light. When you can see yourself, in all your beautiful glory, all your (in)decisions become so much easier to make.

When you get stuck on negative self-talk, see if you can stop for a second and think of how your future self would react. Would future self take any time to be bothered by opinionated comments, or would she shrug it off knowing that others' opinions have no true impact on how you continue to evolve?

Actually, future self can help in many situations. When the alarm goes off for you to get up for your early morning routine before the family starts needing you, you have two choices. You can snooze the alarm and go back to sleep, or you can put your feet on the floor, sit up, and set off on what you intended to do to give yourself the time and space to be your best.

We all want to be better in our future, so it is safe to say that future self would never push the snooze button. Future self is happy and fit and spreads light with loving kindness, all by turning off the alarm and taking action.

Use your future self to help you make your decisions today. Choices become easier to make when you have guidance from your future self. Set your affirmation with true positive transformation in mind, and the belief will come. Trust yourself, soon to be your future self!

Here are some affirmations you might consider adding to your list:

- I am proud of all I have accomplished
- I honor the best parts of myself and share them with others
- Today I give myself permission to be greater than my fears
- I feel comfortable with the decisions I make
- My feelings of self esteem are strong
- My feelings of self worth are strong

- I have high self confidence
 - I realize I have the right to change my mind
 - I am always treated with consideration and respect
 - I believe in and trust myself
 - I choose to respond to criticism in a constructive way
 - I see criticism as information that empowers me
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See the Rose in Everything

It can be difficult to stop and smell the roses when you are rushing around all the time, trying to keep on top of all you do and still connect meaningfully with others. But it is important to remember to find the rose in your every day.

“The difference between misery and happiness depends on what we do with our attention,” says Sharon Salzberg, author of the book *Real Love: The Art of Mindful Connection*. We choose to either focus on the positive or negative at every thought.

I heard it takes more muscles to frown than smile, yet with all the negativity we see in the media every day, is it surprising that those muscles aren't being developed even more? That's why it is essential to overcome potentially impulsive negative reactions to the events and people around us.

When we react positively, supportively, and lovingly with one another, we help create a positive impact beyond ourselves. We are all connected and the better we are to others, the better we will feel from others. It is a simple law of attraction. Some call it [karma](#). Others practice [metta](#). No matter what, we're better off when we are good to others.

So why is it so hard for us to keep our attention to go towards happiness and not misery? Sometimes it is jealousy, sometimes it is self pity, sometimes it is being treated badly every day by someone in your life. The list is basically endless.

Hence the importance of at least once a day looking for a rose in your life. It can be an actual flower, but better if it is not. See the wonder in post-it notes keeping you organized, the sparkle of life in a child's eye, ample food in your fridge, or the friendly neighbor who watered your plants for you last week.

The expression "look on the bright side," is hard to hear when you have just been fired, live with a teenager, are not sure how you'll manage to get through a divorce, or worse, loss of a loved one, or other difficult periods in our lives. But it is important that in everything there is a lesson, and in every thing we have a chance to decide to react to bring happiness or react to bring misery to the forefront of our attention.

Meditation is an important practice to cultivate into your daily life as it helps you remember to react as positively as you can in each situation. Additionally, making a practice of daily gratitude is essential to remaining positive. Some people find it helpful to write down what they are grateful for in their journal each morning.

Maintaining a daily practice of meditation and gratitude keeps attention clear and reactions more positive. It is good for us personally, which is in turn good for all around us. What rose will you see today?

Explore how to live a love-filled life of gratitude...

[LOVE YOUR LIFE](#)

7 Tips to Maintain a Balanced Frequency for Health

Energy is constantly moving in every object, expanding and contracting at various speeds. Frequency is the rate at which this energy moves and is measured in hertz. Vibration is energy contracting and oscillation is energy expanding.

Everything in the universe has a particular frequency signature which allows our consciousness to determine one object from another.

In order to remain healthy, your body must vibrate at the right frequency. When our frequency is either too high or too low is when we get sick.

Maintaining a frequency emitting to the world in the range of 62-72 Hz will provide you with a sense of calmed balance and a centeredness that is already within you.

Some ways to maintain a healthy frequency includes:

1. Simply being aware of your emotions and further not letting outside influences disrupt your steady reaction to how you are feeling.
2. Mindfully choosing to consume the most natural, wholesome food you can and of course couple that with moderate exercise.
3. Spend time doing things you enjoy with people you love and provide positive reinforcement in your life (bonus points if the conversation results in laughter).
4. Consciously choosing to be kind to others, or helping others often.
5. Read and educate yourself on new topics.

6. Make time for sleep. Sleep is nature's medicine. Lack of sleep increases stress levels, which causes great imbalance to both body and mind.
7. Meditation. Getting your mind to stop for even a few minutes every day does wonders to calm our reactions, helps us to accomplish more each day, and provides a sense of connection both to the outer world and our inner self.

Remember your frequency daily. Be good to the people (and objects for that matter) around you, and maintain a steady relationship to your emotions. Also, think not only about what you are "getting," but also what you are emitting out into the world. What goes out comes back. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

You might be amazed to find the more and better you give, the more and better you get. And the more balanced your frequency will remain.

From the innovator Nikola Tesla: "If you want to find the secrets of the Universe, think in terms of energy, frequency and vibration."

Positive Mindset from Kéa, Greece

I'm living the dream. Even during a time of struggle, I am enjoying each moment to the fullest.

Of course it helps that I'm sitting poolside at an AirBnB apartment where I'm staying for a few days on the Greek island of Kea. It's the first infinity pool I've been in that looks

out over the ocean.

Every day we pry ourselves away from the hotel paradise to hike the ancient trails of Kea's arid landscape. It is August-hot out there! My partner and I are sweating up a storm as the sun beats down on us, and we are loving every minute of it.

We value the ability of our bodies to move. We know that fresh air inhaled deeply will give us even more energy, that the varied scenery will exhilarate our minds, and even though it might sound slightly off, that the power it takes to go uphill will be returned on the way back down.

When there is no hurry to get there, no rush to beat the clock, when one can just be in the moment and enjoy what one has, there can be incredible peace within. Ok, yes, I know, it helps that I'm on vacation. One can't always be so mindful when one's boss is giving grief or the kids need to be fed...

But I drink in these moments. I absorb as much as I can because I know the sea won't be my backyard for long. My mantra is to embrace it, to enjoy it as best I can. My attitude is to keep positive, even as sweat is dripping down my nose.

It can be hard to not let the negative things creep in and take over the beauty in life. But it is important to keep your mindset positive. Remember that everything is temporary – the good *and* the bad. Everything passes and we are left with alone with our thoughts.

So the question is: When I get back to my regular work schedule and pressures of mommy-hood, will I keep this energy, or will I let the daily distractions cloud my thoughts?

Honestly, I know the clouds will come. But every day I will meditate to keep the calm and every day I will resolve to think about the heat of the sun beating down on my glistening skin (and this will be easier once the snow starts falling in

Wisconsin).

Actually, it sounds like a great task to add to my daily routine. A visual memory of the intensity of heat and climbing the steep rocky landscape. Discomfort of body can bring comfort of thought. It is all in how you think about the experience.

I hope you can look at your life situations in a positive perspective. Rather than focus on being frustrated that you have to cook yet another meal, think of the nourishment you are providing to yourself and/or your loved ones. Rather than be annoyed at the alarm clock going off to drag yourself out of bed to work, consider how lucky you are to have a job to work hard for.

Probably if you start to incorporate meditation into your daily life, seeing the positive will come more naturally to you. It isn't that we should ignore the negative, or never get upset, but being mindful helps keep us out of the negativity rut that is easy to fall into.

Chin up, stay positive, and recognize the simple wonders of the life around you!

Happiness as a Mindset

"It is all in your head." Has anyone ever said this to you? It can be really frustrating to hear this, especially when you are having a bad day.

But the truth is: your mind holds the power to do what you tell it to do!

I've been walking around Athens, Greece, the past few days. On

two different days I passed two different women wearing two different shirts, but both had the same phrase written in front: "Make your own happiness."

What a sweet thing to read/see. For the past several years, the country's people have been made to struggle by the government for financial troubles caused by the government. For years, the people have faced the austerities put upon them by the law.

My friends and family have taken pay cuts, seen decreases in their pensions, lost their jobs, and can barely afford their rent. In general it is a very sad situation to say the least. Even though the cafés are open and people are out at night doesn't mean all is well.

But seeing these shirts and the loving, happy camaraderie among friends gives me such hope for my second home.

These ladies really get it. The situation might be miserable, but you can make your own happiness among the chaos.

Keeping a **positive mindset** is the most important step. Maintaining **communication with others** is right there behind it, especially in a very social country like Greece. **Setting and achieving realistic goals** is also very important. Knowing that you can accomplish things that are important to you gives you a great confidence and can bring you happiness.

Even in difficult times, we can achieve small victories, and increase our joy, increase our happiness. It really is all in the mind. Keep your mind on the positives, and do your best to not focus on the negative. Of course you can't ignore big problems, but if you can manage to not dwell on them, it will make a huge difference.

Be sure to keep your expectations realistic (not too high) and celebrate the small victories.

When you can keep the disappointments from clouding your mind is a big achievement. Recognize that it is temporary. Look at the good that surrounds you and focus on that.

When you need some encouragement, connect with a friend, share a laugh or two, and look for the positives in your life. Help your mind get to the place of happiness.

5 Tips to De-Stress

In our ever-rushing society, we all have too much on our plate, never enough time, and an increasing level of stress. We're taxed and feel the pressure to perform and meet the demands of our daily lives.

It is important to take steps every day to ensure you keep stress under control.

- We'll forgo the obvious recommendation of meditation here. If you aren't already incorporating a few minutes of meditation into your daily routine, do yourself a favor and do it right now. Seriously, stop reading this article, put your device down or turn away from the computer. Sit with your eyes closed for 5 minutes. Just breathe. ([Here's my post on meditating in case it helps.](#))

Exercise – or at least Move More

There are been enough studies on this for you to know and hopefully believe that exercises is good for us. Endorphins released after we exercise just makes us feel good. Any moderate amount of movement is good. Walking is probably the best way to start if you have been sitting for too long. If

the stress is coming from your computer, walking is a great release. Especially if you can get outside and breathe fresh air.

Dial Down the Caffeine

Caffeine gets most of us through the day. Especially when we are suffering from a lack of sleep. It just feeds the cycle. As a stimulant, it increases adrenaline in the body, which you might know is a stress hormone.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20046037>

Listen to Uplifting Music

Music serves as therapy for some people. Listening to relaxing music has been shown to lower blood pressure, heart rate, and anxiety! Playing music that makes you happy can actually lift your mood, which naturally causes you to relax. What's more, singing can greatly improve your mood. Just check out this [Time article Singing Changes Your Brain](#).

Be Grateful

This one should become completely natural for you. Take note of the very simple things in life that might be taken for granted. An example: when you are grumbling in your head about having to exercise, take a moment to recognize how amazing it is that you have the ability to walk and move your fully functioning body. Or: When you are asked to do *one more thing* when your task list is already maxed out, take a breath and be thankful you are needed. At the first sign of a negative, stress-filled thought, try to train yourself to immediately think of one thing that gives you calm.

Journal or Talk to Someone

Journaling can be very therapeutic. But it can also be harmful when you use it to "vent." Venting, or sharing your complaints, is actually counterproductive from the Law of

Attraction standpoint. The more negative you are, the more negative you'll stay. Even when you are having a hard day, find something positive to share with a friend, or to write in your journal. This goes hand in hand with the mindset in the Be Grateful section above. If you *are* going to talk/write about negative or stressful situations, try to tap into how the situation makes you *feel*. The better you can connect to your emotions, the easier it will be to remove stress from your life.

Obviously an excellent way to deal with stress is just to keep it away completely! Once you can accept that you can't control everything in your life, the easier it will be to keep a positive attitude.

Also, do what you can to relax, but try to find relaxation that doesn't involve your computer or the TV. Play a board game, take up knitting or drawing, read a book, take a walk around the block. And don't balk at the idea of taking a nap. Sometimes a lack of sleep is what is making us susceptible to stress in the first place.

Being present in your daily life is very important, and taking a moment to take stock in the goodness that shines on you will help reduce that stress into a manageable portion.

Practice Loving Detached Acceptance

Earthly attachment is a tricky thing. We love people and we love our memories. Our memories are kept alive through

objects. Sometimes we get caught up in the objects we buy. As in the objects become precious and the desire to keep these safe can build some anxiety.

We don't want to let go of what is so dear to us – neither people nor the objects we own, houses included. The thought of a friend or family member dying most likely brings tears to your eyes. And imagining an important object or beloved person being taken away can be heartbreaking. We can also be attached to ideas and self conceptions.

It is helpful to be mindful of these attachments. When the next someone new or something shiny comes into your life, see it an opportunity to practice loving detached acceptance.

The only way to be truly free is to remain detached from the objects and even people in our life. This doesn't mean we shouldn't LOVE extremely and intensely. We just remember these things outside ourselves are not US.

In terms of relationships, this means that you don't try to control the other person in an attempt to "keep them safe." You just accept them as they are. If you aren't meant to be together, your friendship will fade naturally and hopefully love is not lost. But if you *are* aligned, you will gain a deeper relationship if you love like this, meeting the other person completely as they are.

That doesn't mean you'll not be sad if said person leaves your life, but rather you will have trust that another friend or dear person will come to fill that space. You are living *your* life, and people and objects come and go.

Basically, this means don't cry over accidentally smashing two of your best serving bowls, despite having carried them with you to various apartments, across the ocean twice, for 20 years. Even if you are afraid that without them you won't remember the parties you used them for when you're 80. (Um, TMI?)

It is ok to be sad, but don't dwell on it. In the moment you are scooping up the broken shards, revel in your memories. Think back on those great friendship gatherings, remembering the hummus you served in the one bowl, or that Thanksgiving when you had mashed potatoes in the bigger one. And then recognize that bringing these memories back now will give you a better chance to remember them when you're 80 and hopefully keep you more present in each moment.

Then as you are placing the debris in the bin, ask yourself: What does having this beautiful treasure gone now open up for me in my life?

Loving detached acceptance gives you the freedom to enjoy all the people and things in your life, but keeps you mindful that not everything is permanent in life and certainly not in your control.

3 Truths You Need to Know to Be Happier

We all want to be happier. It is built into our human wiring. Yet it is increasingly challenging to achieve that state in our highly competitive society. And what's more, some people are confused about what happiness even entails.

Truth bomb #1: Happiness is not measured as being less miserable.

Nancy Etcoff gives a great TED presentation [Hooked on a Feeling: The Pursuit of Happiness and Human Design](#).

She explains that people are using medication to keep anti-depressed, and illegal drugs to elevate their situation. If we

could only see that positive thoughts and remarks are the key to counteract all the negative floating around.

We must understand the depths of emotions and recognized that emotions are not just feelings. When we label, describe, and discuss our emotions, it helps us regulate them.

Are you experiencing one of these emotions? Anger, anxiety, concern, contempt, content, depressed, disgust, excited, fear, frustrated, irritated, joy, loving, sad, satisfied, shocked, surprise, tense.

If you can identify a particular emotion you are feeling, how much more deeply can you describe your emotional experiences and how many subtle variations do you use?

[Eric Barker shares research results](#) of a neuroscientist who studied how to reverse depression. Among the small changes you can make are:

- Regularly ask yourself “What am I grateful for?”
- Label your negative emotions.
- Be ok with “good enough.”
- Connect with people directly.

Truth bomb #2: Nature makes us happy

It shouldn't come as a surprise that cities are incorporating more trees and green spaces as they are building up.

People generally slow down when they are in nature, they are usually *not* at work, and the fresh green air certainly helps relax the mind.

I was so surprised to read in [National Geographic](#) that studied housing projects with more trees had lower crime rates and lower rates of aggression. It isn't the oxygen that helps; it is the community that a courtyard creates, where neighbors

know neighbors and are connecting socially.

Truth bomb #3: Being connected to a community helps us feel we belong

Having a tree to congregate under isn't the only way we get connected these days. We can find communities of like-minded folks on the internet in all sorts of bundles.

We see community centers and libraries providing various community engagement opportunities, while pop-up free yoga sessions and concerts in the park are keeping people connected on other levels as well.

While we need to be content with ourselves to find true happiness, it turns out having others around us is huge as well (as noted in this [Psychology Today](#) article).

When you can find people who support you as well, the sky is really the limit to your happiness.

Take time to recognize and note what you are grateful for in your life. Connect with other good people, identify your emotions, and don't get caught up in perfection.

Your higher purpose is to be good and to be happy. Embrace it and allow it to flow into your life.