



IS TODAY A YES DAY?

I have some days when this COVID thing gets me down. I miss my family, my colleagues, my friends. I get tired of looking at myself on Zoom. I have the urge to drive –anywhere, like a 16- year-old with a newly minted driver’s license. Then there are other days, when I am really jazzed about wearing shorts to work and walking the dog in between tasks. Last week I was talking about this roller coaster during a radio interview and suddenly remembered Steve Jobs 2005 Stanford University Commencement speech. Random, I know. Stay with me. His theme, “Connecting the Dots,” addresses the defining moments in a person’s life. He had three such moments: disappointing his parents by quitting college, getting fired from Apple, and learning he had pancreatic cancer. By anyone’s measure these were “bitter pills.” In retrospect, however, he credits them for his pivotal successes and his engaged, deeply satisfying life.

Connecting the dots for Jobs was his unwavering passion for his work. As a young man, he found college to be mostly boring. Out of a sense of obligation to his hard-working parents, he hunted for classes that interested him. Before he quit, he found a compelling class called calligraphy. That calligraphy class led to the typefaces that distinguished Mac in the world of personal computing.

Many years later, he found himself with some extra time on his hands. Ousted in a power struggle at Apple, he became intrigued by animation. He started a little company called Pixar, and another computer company, called neXt. Eventually, Apple acquired neXt and once again, Jobs was back on top with products such as iPods, iPhones, and iPads.

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In 2004 when he learned of his pancreatic cancer, he began the habit of asking himself if he would be satisfied if today was his last day on earth. If he had too many “no” days, he changed whatever he was doing so that he could turn that “no” into a “yes.” One might conclude that with his stratospheric success, it was easy for him to have more “yes” than “no” days. Having worked with a fair number of successful executives, I would argue that “yes” days are particularly elusive. Being able to reframe perceived negatives into positives may be a natural talent to some, but to most of us, it is a skill to be developed with awareness and practice.

I suggest starting small. Decide on an achievable action that you could accomplish today. Try one of these:

- Take a walk around the block after lunch.
- Leave your cell phone out of earshot for an hour.
- Eat a meal at the table instead of in front of the television or your computer screen.
- Drink a glass of water.
- Try a piece of fruit instead of a cookie this afternoon.
- Turn off the electronics an hour earlier this evening.
- Clean out a drawer in your desk or dresser.
- Close your eyes for five minutes.
- Call a friend.
- Thank someone.
- Donate.

Rather than criticizing yourself for not doing any of it enough, celebrate that you did it today. ***Give yourself a Yes!***

In the worlds of business and medicine we are so accustomed to looking for problems and fixing them, that we tend to apply that methodology to everything. This is what is so vexing about wellness. It requires a major change in perspective. Rather than looking for what is wrong, we need to start looking for what is right. In business terms, wellness is about investing rather than spending. In medical terms, it is about preventing and maintaining health rather than diagnosing and curing disease. In Jobs' terms, it is about turning no into yes.



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Patricia M. Fuller has dedicated the last 20+ years to designing and delivering wellness programs. Her events earn consistently excellent ratings for her holistic approach and her real world application.

Prior to concentrating in wellness, Pat taught accounting and auditing as an adjunct professor at the University of Tampa. She earned her CPA designation in 1992 as a senior associate for Coopers & Lybrand. She has a Masters in Business Administration from the University of Utah.

Pat has a PhD in holistic nutrition. In 2010, she was board certified by the Holistic Nutrition Credentialing Board. Her areas of research include stress management and eating habits. She is a Certified Wellcoach and a member of the Institute of Coaching. She is an annual attendee to The Harvard Medical School Conference, Coaching In Leadership & Healthcare.

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