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WHAT'S BECOME A PRIORITY?

STORIES OF
HOPE AND CHANGE
FROM PERSONAL AND
BUSINESS COACHES
AND THEIR CLIENTS
SINCE THE EVENTS
OF 9-11

CoachVille.com

You can't shovel out darkness, but you can bring in light and the darkness will disappear. I believe that anger and hate can best be vanquished with increased acts of goodness and kindness. So I have printed up over 6,000 charity boxes that I've been distributing for others to share and pass it forward. The idea is to encourage everyone to start their day with a tangible act of kindness—give charity—a penny, nickel, dime or whatever every single day. When the charity box is filled, give it to the charity of your choice, I'm not attached to where this goes. What is important is to start each day with a tangible act of charity and then keep looking for more opportunities. And encourage others to give charity too. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson said, All it takes is one good deed to change the world for good. Please contact me if you would like charity boxes to distribute freely.

Dovid Grossman
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Prior to 9-11 my partner and I were part owners of an internet technology firm. Even before the attacks were beginning to see real cracks in our business model as the technology economy was already slowing. It was very stressful. I had developed an off beat three hour a night sleeping pattern, and an ulcer. We were confident that we had the recourses to ride it all out and make adjustments as the economy continued to slide and we were prepared to dig in.

On 9-11, I watched the news and went to work. For us, the most important thing we could do was keep the network up under that volume of traffic so people could communicate with loved ones. After that all wore off, I had more and more trouble continuing to get up and go to work. I was anxious and depressed. However, deep down inside, I was ashamed to admit that while all the world was coming together, and support the victims and their families, I was anxious and depressed about my business. On a mental and even spiritual level, I could see that it was all trivial, however, in my gut, it was tearing me apart.

By 11-11, my partner and I were in the process of moving to a small town, and starting a newer, simpler, cleaner running, MUCH LESS STRESSFUL business. Without the stress of my previous situation, I was able to begin a grieving process for the 9-11 victims around 1-11. Today, I am much more congruent with my true priorities and honest with myself. Leaving my previous business cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars but may have saved my life. Without 9-11 I am certain that would have never happened.

**Lisa Hayes
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I find I am moving ahead with a different pace and intensity. The choices I make have changed and for the better. Looking at each day as an opportunity to use discretion in what I do, where I go and with whom I associate has gotten better. 9-11 was the day I stopped buying stuff.

**Sue Trumpfheller
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My husband worked in the WTC 9 years ago, when it was bombed. It was that incident that changed our thinking from New York is IT to a real examination of the idea, and ultimately, a job change. Two days before 9-11, he cancelled a trip to Boston and NYC. Had he gone, it is most likely he would have been in the towers that morning. We now never fail to kiss goodnight or before we leave for work, and we communicate every day while on the road. We celebrate and realize how fragile life truly is.

**Kris Paige, A.C.T.
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Celebrating life is my highest value, the way I show gratitude for everyday I'm on this earth. The smallest homey rituals, like smiling across the breakfast table at my Beloved, have become even more sacred to me, an appreciation for the incalculable gift of life.

I want to be fully present. Staying unfocused or numb blocks out half the light of life. It is the anti-light. Now I consciously turn off the television or put down the book to really BE with the cherished people in the room, or call the ones far away.

It's ironic that I have believed all this for decades, have written books about it—but now Life Savor has clicked into sharper focus than ever before. I want to keep the focus daily, to be present and filled with gratitude for the great fortune of living here, and for the love and light of all kinds that surround me.

**Roz Van Meter
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As an American living abroad during September 11th, I was acutely aware of how vulnerable I was and with the events unfolding over the following days, also how misunderstood I was as a US Citizen/American and what that represented.

I had already been organizing the International Mixer Utrecht for Expats living in the Netherlands and we had some intense discussions around culture and safety and national pride following that event. People from countries other than the US were confused and frightened and wanting to be understood and heard.

Now that I live back in the US, my Dutch husband and I feel it extremely important to continue to provide an arena for dialogue and friendship to develop around diversity and culture. We recently launched Friends Across Cultures based in Southern California. Our dream is that we can continue to build friendships between cultures within our local communities and eventually erase the misguided stereotypes and inaccurate information that is bred by fear and lack of knowledge of other races and cultures.

**Julia Ferguson Andriessen
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The first thing that changed for me was on the Friday after the 11th. Some friends of mine organised some peace-singing to co-incide with the three minutes of silence that the whole of the country were marking. The singing was very moving, and then we moved into the silence. In the midst of the fear and despair, I suddenly became aware of the sun shining on my face, children laughing and ducks quacking—and I suddenly felt very deep joy, along with the realisation that life was so damned precious and could be taken away at any moment that I had to celebrate it and live it as fully as possible.

Overtime, this realization has developed into a huge shift for me—for all of my life so far, I have tried to survive it, to get by—now I want to LIVE, even though that is scary at times, uncomfortable often, I realize I have no choice but to live as fully as possible, because survival just won't work—whatever I do, I won't survive this thing—no one will, so living is the only choice open to me.

So, I have started to make decisions from a place of living, not surviving, saying yes to things I would have said no to before because it would have been easier, taking more risks, doing more of what I want rather than what I should. I don't always manage it, but it's the direction I have to go in.

**Aboodi
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Before 9-11, I was very reticent to share my faith, because my relationship to God had been rather tumultuous. I all too often felt I didn't even come close to measuring up to what I believed a Christian should be. After September 11, I certainly felt a shift within my heart—a need to share my faith, to come out of the closet, if you will. Even though my faith in Christ had often wavered, after the September 11 crisis, my faith was the one thing I was sure of. Even though God does not always protect our bodies from the effects of evil, I know he protects our souls, if we have given them over to His protection. I also know God's good will prevail despite the evildoers' intentions.

What does this have to do with my business? After 9-11, I knew that if I was going to coach people from the platform of honoring their creative gifts, I had to honor my own essence and be who I was created to be. I am a Christian steeped in the traditions of my faith. I decided to change the name of my business from CreativeBizCoach to Intentional Life, Inc. with the tagline: Creating the Life God Intended for You. I now refer to myself as a Christian Life Coach and begin each coaching session with prayer. Even my clients who are unsure of their faith are strengthened when we pray together or refer to Scriptures for answers to their questions or reassurance that their questions are age-old ones which have no easy answers.

Since becoming more clear about who I am, I have attracted clients who are clearly searching for a Christian perspective on coaching and how faith relates to their life journey.

**Sharina Alongi Adkins
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After 9-11, I realized to a greater extent that life is short and life is precious. I've thrown myself into relationships more fully, have spent more time with family, and take greater care with my beloved husband. I've given up sarcasm and negativity because I now see how it has robbed my life of joy and spontaneity. My focus is much less money oriented and people oriented. I find I'm living with less (materially) and liking it more.

Although I am grieved by the violence and loss of life from 9-11, I am grateful for a new view that it has given me. Time is not money. Time is a gift.

Business dropped off dramatically after 9-11 and I worried that I'd have to get a real job (a death of the spirit kind of job) if things didn't get better. But, because of the apparent dearth of employment opportunities, I ventured out in different directions and now own three businesses instead of one. Each of the three businesses would be considered small by most standards, but with multiple streams of income I have more consistent income and less chance of being left high and dry.

I also find that the three businesses keep me busy and far from boredom because they vary so widely in scope. I'm meeting more people which means more potential clients for my other businesses. It's circular. I'm enjoying this new diversification and now I'm working on a book (or two) as another source of passive income. New ideas continue to come fast and furious which requires me to journal to keep up with them so I don't lose track. I'm loving it. Necessity is surely the mother of invention and creativity.

**Holly Cumming
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Asking myself how I wanted to show up differently a few weeks after the events of 9-11, I found myself doing something a little differently in my discussions with others. I discovered a desire to increase my tolerance and decrease my judgments whenever differences of opinion showed up in my conversations.

I chose to be more patient and more willing to deeply understand where people were coming from before jumping into judgment. I began viewing relationships as more valuable than arguments and my need to be right. On several occasions, I know that my peaceful response to others' emotional charge made a positive mark on their lives. I discovered that this subtle way of responding to others, is a quiet yet powerful force for enhanced relationships.

**Steve Davis
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Since 9-11 I completely reevaluated my life, my relationships, my career, and most of all I evaluated how I impacted the world.

First, I looked at my relationships. I evaluated who added to vitality and who drew from it. I spent more time focusing in on loving relationships and cultivating those. I also attracted and am in love with the most wonderful partner in the world. He is the very best thing that ever happened to me...all after 9-11. I also decided to change or terminate, gently of course, certain relationships that would be emotional vampires in the short and/or long run. The result? Less stress and more time to concentrate on what really matters and relationships matter most.

Second, I looked at my career. Was I doing what I really wanted to be doing or what the image was supposed to be? As a result, I joined Coachville.com and the GSC. I'm spending time improving myself and being a model to others while building a business. My dream business has been to open up an adult learning center and coaching studio. Well, the dream is coming true.

On a greater scale, what I've stopped tolerating is thinking that I don't have choices and that others have been telling me that the choices are limited. I've confronted the fallacy that I don't have choices and embraced the reality that I do. I've also stopped tolerating negativity and doom/gloom based on whatever the news of the day is, whoever is downsizing, etc. Life is too short to focus on the blahs of the day.

I truly believe, as a result, that life is an infinite journey in a finite amount of time.

**Andrea Ahlsen
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I have taken a project that has been on the back burner and moved it to the front. It took a few months to realize how important it is to complete. Only, when information and ideas on the project kept showing up, in different forms, did the message get through. This synchronicity is for you Sue, pay attention

I have taught Preparedness classes, like What to do before an Earthquakes, Y2K and other Emergencies for many years. It has been a small sideline in the big picture of other teaching and coaching that I do.

Now my book/booklet—Things to Do JUST-IN-CASE—is pushing to get finished. I am finding old notes and forms that will be useful in today's world and the challenges we are facing following 9-11. The information is essential and the issues timely.

My big ah-ha has been the importance of protecting our breath—the quality of the air we breathe in times of disasters. It is, after all, the source of life.

**Sue Trumpfheller
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My transition from 30 years in corporate America to a small business consulting practice had actually gone quite smoothly by most standards. I was enjoying the freedom and the more enriched life that came from my time being spent in personal endeavors. However, after 2 plus years I was beginning to encounter some feelings of lack of value. I guess it was symptomatic of someone missing the rush of business challenges and the sense of accomplishment from solving complex issues.

9-11 certainly put a new perspective on what really is to be valued, however that was not the most dramatic change in my life brought on by the great tragedy in New York and Washington DC. Seeking to understand and find some comfort from the troubled times, I went to church. Having been estranged from a regular church for nearly 40 years, this was not an easy thing. Because of that bold step brought on by 9-11, I discovered more that just comfort in troubled times.

The outcome of this action was that the return to church filled a void in my spirituality sector and facilitated better balance in my life. The feelings of lack of value are gone because the balance has allowed me to make a more complete transition from the business world to the service world. What is now important, is what I can do for others and the community. Helping others achieve their dreams, self actualization, or solve a personal issue is now the juice that drives me and excites me on a daily basis. In a round about manner the events of 9-11 led to a renewed personal value structure where giving is superior to doing and taking.

**Joe Callison
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The changes that occurred in me since 9-11 were deeply personal. The events gave me a renewed awareness and appreciation for this Country. I am a second generation American, on both my mother and father's sides so I've always been aware of the American dream and the freedom we have. But the depth and meaning of freedom became so apparent and real to me since 9-11. I watched in awe with a renewed trust in American's when I saw and felt the gentleness, compassion, love and understanding that rose from the attempt to destroy us, and which crossed race, gender, and religious lines. We were all suffering, each one in our own way, for one another, our brethren. I lost the social cynicism that had built up around the crime, poverty and violence we struggle with, and it was replaced with recognition that there is a reason for everything, and which we don't always understand. This country has an entrenched, though sometimes not obvious belief that everyone has a given right to be treated with dignity and respect. Today, in awe, I see so plainly how blessed I am to have been born in this country, with freedom and opportunity to be whatever I choose to be, and to do whatever I choose to do. I can't image any other way, nor would I ever want to. For me, the connection American's have with one another became so personal and so clear as a result of the events of 9-11. And it is for this reason that the terrorists lost and will always lose war against us; American's are more united than ever, consciously and collectively. I am so proud to be an American, to live in America and to be part of the culture of America. This has been my greatest change.

**MariJo Hayes, M.A.
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As I watched the planes hit the tower on the taped replays, tears ran down my cheeks and I felt an overwhelming sadness for whatever had caused this and the effects of it in the days to come. I grieved for the loss of lives and for the wounds which had caused these actions and the further wounds they would create. I cried and sang my grief, which is my way of releasing and dealing with emotions.

Over the next twenty-four hours as I spoke and interacted with many people. I noticed a pattern in their behaviour. Some went into the pain and released it; others pushed aside the pain and went into anger, talking reprisals and fear of more attacks. They avoided the emotional chaos within them and concentrated instead on blame and answering aggression, using it as a shield so that they did not have to feel the pain.

Weeks and months later, the people who had not expressed and released their pain were still stuck in places of revenge, hatred and fear. Those who had cried, grieved and released their pain had turned the event into a catalyst for looking at and examining their own lives. They chose to learn from the crisis; they examined the politics behind it, they explored it further with objectivity.

Having this occasion to observe hundreds of people dealing with a traumatic and devastating catastrophe, I had the incredible opportunity to prove to myself without any shadow of a doubt that those who can fully express and release their emotions live a much more fulfilling and enriching life. Not being able to stay in the pain until it

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leaves, results in people being terribly stuck and holding being a victim to themselves as a part of their identity. As a coach, I learned that if we can help our clients and ourselves, stay in the moment, face pain, grief, sadness, hurt and fear, that we can help people move through their lives much more easily and grow and develop emotionally. This is perhaps the single most important life lesson I have ever learned and since then, I do not allow myself to hide from pain since I now fully understand the cost of running away from it.

**Gwyn Nagy
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In Chinese, the word for opportunity is the same as the word for crisis, so after 9-11, I expanded my business. Some people understand this, while others don't. Times of crisis usually weed out competition. This time of crisis forced me to hone my skills. I became more organized, more focused, and more effective. I added business sectors and worked diligently to cross-pollinate them through a newsletter and a website that honors who I am, danaskins.com

Prior to 9-11, I had become somewhat lazy in finding new clients and promoting my business. I have since shaken off the dust of apathy and put my hands to the plow. During the last ten months, I have become, organically, more focused on my clients. Everybody wins with this attitude.

I have ceased to lose money in the stock market, where I have no knowledge, and have focused on real estate development, where I have a great deal of knowledge. This focus has allowed me the opportunity to see my business as a vehicle to achieve higher purposes encouraging people to get behind themselves and see higher purposes in what they do.

I no longer attach any value to the business, per se. I am not a Realtor. I am not a developer. I am not a public speaker. I am Dan Askins. I have value and worth outside of what I do, and my businesses are a function of me instead of me becoming a function of my businesses. I now work less, and at the end of the day, I will not be lionized for selling a lot of houses or developing tons of land. I will be remembered for how I pour myself into the lives of other people.

**Bea Fields
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The way I looked at 9-11 and how it effected me. I've always been a truly optimistic person, the type sometime people love or hate because you always find the good in everything. Obviously September 11th affected everyone on an extremely deep level, and with so much sorrow and pain, finding goodness within it's devastation seemed a challenge. That 's how it affected me the most because in the darkest places within and around me, I was challenged more than ever to find the light.

In a world often driven to thriving and feeding our fears, September 11th gave us a huge time out, and a much-needed moment of silence and reflection. One question I began to hear repetitively, both in my professional and personal communities, was how do I deal with the pain and the anger? I began to see the theme of what was happening, that conversations started to shift and merge on a sole topic. Although it was difficult to not revel in the unfairness or inhumanity of the situation, as this time it hit us close to home, people began to accept responsibility to the reality of what was happening around us and essentially what we wanted to create for our own lives moving forward.

Some say the world takes on a consciousness level that aligns us all, I believe that. These shifts are aligned with the energy sources connected within our chakras levels. I'm not an expert but I decided it was time to start sharing my thoughts. Wow, what wonderful conversations we had. I began to talk about how we were coming out of the

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cycle of the heart chakra with world events, like the passing of Mother Teresa and Lady Di, which connected us on that energy level. That we were now moving into the throat chakra, which is around communication. Events were to occur where people would speaking up for what they believe in, fighting for what they felt was right and justice; they'd begin to communicate more than they ever did before, even with families and friends. They say that in history these were the cycles where wars broke out. If September 11th gave us one thing, it gave us a common ground, where we all started relating (and communicating) with each other. The walls were lowered, our guards were down, I took a few peoples hands and began to walk right in.

**Cassandra L. Gierden
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Stability and security were my personal twin towers. I was afraid to imagine what abundance could come my way if I was willing to let go of my need for security. September 11th helped remind me how precious every moment is and how stability is illusory. Given that reminder, I was able to cut back to 24 hours at my day job and am enjoying more time to think and create and imagine possibilities.. I am just building a coaching practice so while I have less income now, I am far richer in every other way. Having more unstructured time has also allowed me to pursue my dream of becoming a writer. I want to be the Erma Bombeck of the boomer generation—perhaps a bit edgier. You heard it here first!

**Holly Krueger
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The biggest change that I have made is in making sure that ALL partnerships are fun and mutually rewarding!

Prior to that, I accepted Coaching/Consulting Clients on the basis of financial gain...for one or both of us. NOW, I have initiated a process, whereby there is an initial interview, of sorts. If we really click, we go forward. If the conversation is lukewarm for either one of us, there is a referral made instead. Ironically, this new arrangement has resulted in more favorable conditions, not just personally, but also financially!

It just goes to show, sometimes, less is better!

**Pat Graham-Block
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Prior to the events of September 11th, I had decided that I wanted to become more involved in living in a community environment. To me, this meant joining with a group of people who had the same vision and priority for community living that I had. I had found such a group and we were actually in the process of bringing our dream into reality as the first of our homes had just begun to be built. This was a big risk for many of us, both financially and emotionally. This decision had also involved many changes in my life, including the sale of my prior home and moving into a rented property until my new home could be finished.

After the events of September 11th, I felt the rug had been pulled out from beneath me. My friends in New York City and Washington, D.C. were telling me of the effect of this event on their lives. I was very frightened and unsettled and wondering whether or not my dream would become a reality. I started to worry about every detail of the process I was going through and I was driving myself into the ground.

Finally, one day I was so overwhelmed by the uncertainty, that I sat down and said enough! I remembered some wonderful coaching I had received just the month before on a group call (the Coaching Salon with Shirley Anderson). The coach had asked me why I had joined this community in the first place. I replied that I had chosen this so that I would not feel alone and would be able to call on other people I knew, trusted, respected and loved when I needed them. She had then observed that asking those around me for help was a major shift for me since I was used to being self-reliant. What a simple observation, however, one that I could not immediately see!! The light bulb went on immediately!!

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So, after September 11th, I recalled that conversation and I thought, how can I apply that same question and response to my current situation? I realized that instead of doing my old habit of relying on myself and somehow getting myself through this tragedy and uncertainty, I could go to the people in my community with my fears and concerns. And that is exactly what I did!!! The events of September 11th gave me the opportunity to realize that I really did want to live in a community and that I was willing to struggle with the uncomfortable feelings of changing my ways and practice new ways of being with people that give me joy and feed my being! I have been practicing this new way of being ever since!

**Carol Robinson
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Both personally and professionally, I made the decisions not to get caught up in reacting to the event.

I remain committed to running my business based on prior vision and goals without fear of what will happen to the economy.

I traveled for business within a short time of the event. I was and am saddened by armed guards in American airports.

I continue to live my personal life with gratitude and joy. I grieved with those who lost loved ones, prayed for their well-being and for peace.

I remain committed to peace and partnership, supporting speakers, politicians and leaders who seek to understand and act responsibly and from a global perspective. I participated in conversations from a perspective of seeking peaceful resolution.

I struggle with the question of

- 1. How do you create peace and partnership while you protect your loved ones, your property and your country ...regardless of which country you are from?**
- 2. How do you change conversations that have become retaliatory and violence-directed?**
- 3. When is the only option violence?**

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I also wondered how peaceful people can live among those who seek control through violence.

I see that the one way my life has changed is in the questions I ask?

Thank you for this venue.

**Diane Fontenot
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I was on the east coast during the 9-11 attacks. I lost a dear friend in WTC-1. This event forever changed my life and how I live it. As a professional speaker and consultant I travel up to 200 days per year and most trips require an overnight stay. Most days and almost every night that I was away I would call my wife Lisette to say hello or good-night. After 9-11 there are no longer any “mosts” or “almosts.” I never fail to call Lisette EVERY day and say good-night EVERY night. Lisette now travels with me 50% of the time and I am restructuring my business so I can be home with her more

**Kent Burnes
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How is my business different?

I created my signature workshop for my Passionate Purpose Program(tm) for an October 2001 event. The workshop wasn't what I had originally envisioned in July when we advertised it

I spent my evenings adjusting it because I was fueled by a belief that if on 9-11 everyone in the world had been living their passionate purpose, things would have been different. If everyone worldwide knew that they belonged, that they were loved, accepted and perfect just the way they were, there would have been no need—no place—for the anger, the tears or the flames. It just could not have existed. We could not have manifested it.

I opened the workshop with a song by Sweet Honey and the Rock called "We are One." I had a full house that night and everyone stood, sang, and swayed to the music. A testimony that we are all looking to belong, to embrace each other, to focus on what's truly important our roots, our purpose, and our impact on the world. That workshop continues to get my highest ratings.

Today, all my programs, my partnerships, even my dreams are more real, more honest, and embrace me and all that truly fuels me—the good, the bad, and the ugly, as I say in my workshops. Creating the world we want starts with us. I'm finished pretending that it doesn't.

**Maiya Rose Benda
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9-11 reminded me that my physical existence on this planet is finite. I know when it began, I don't know how or when it will be over.

The way to honestly utilize the time I have, is to fully participate in my life. To not 'settle'. To admit to myself that I have often overstayed situations because I was comfortable and familiar with them, or I didn't want to 'make waves'.

I had a shift about tolerations. I gave up tolerating things that I was afraid to deal with because it might damage my image as a “nice guy.” I decided to give up image altogether (still working on it). Choosing congruency instead. As Popeye the Sailor (a wise but little appreciated philosopher) often said: “I yam what I yam and that's all what I yam.”

However what 'I yam what I yam' truly means is that I am deeper than I have been letting on. More honest, more courageous, more open than I have been showing up as. I am what I am, and I'm going to show that to myself and the world.

**Kerry D. Sim
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Like most of the U.S. after 9-11, I spent days glued to the TV, crying a lot, and pondering the old question How, then, shall I live? I suddenly decided that the only reaction that made sense to me was to live as fully as possible. For me, that has meant choosing what makes me feel most fully alive.

Through one of those cosmic coincidences, I re-encountered a man whose philosophy of life and fully alive activities most aligned with mine. I moved away from my home of 38 years, moved in with him, and we've skied, kayaked, mountain biked, hiked, amusement-parked, traveled convertible-top-down, worked, played, fought, loved, and philosophized with enthusiasm. I'm simplifying, throwing out, uncluttering, and putting stuff up for sale.

I'm going for no emotional baggage either. I'm more straight—and less Southern girl nice—and saying no a lot more to other people's agendas for me. I'm finally taking seriously the quote I already had at my computer on 9-11:

Don't try to figure out what you ought to be doing, decide what makes you feel most alive and do that. The world doesn't need you to fix it, it needs people who are fully alive.

**Judy Godinez
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I have always held my relationships with friends and family in high regard. Although I must say I have felt very alone in the past with that value. It seemed as though friends had good intentions, but really never took the time. I was the one to always organize the get-togethers...and friends would tell me if it were not for you, we probably would never do this. They were always grateful when we did and would aim to see each other again soon, but a year later I would organize it all again. It was like pulling teeth, when I knew they actually enjoyed it once we did.

After the 911 I noticed that more people prioritized their relationships with family and friends. I have received more phone calls and have gotten together more often with loved ones who have actually initiated the meeting as a result of the event.

I am so grateful my friends and family have had the hamster wheel of life shaken enough to re-evaluate priorities, and that we get together more often without a special occasion to do so. I wonder if this could be a global movement to get people to see what is really important in life...and maybe has been all along.

**Paula Kerr
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I am a very goal oriented person and coach. Therefore I am especially aware of any signs of disorientation when working with my clients.

Though I always was approaching things in a what I believe is very holistic and integral way trying to include all the values that seem to be of importance, the events on and around 911 have made me much more perceptive to the notion of here and now.

In my own life I have made some valuable changes earlier than originally planned. Working with my clients I am now more aware of the possible danger of postponing decisions that are valuable and important on a long term perspective in favor of actions that appear to be of a high short term necessity. Besides the question what seems most valuable in your life at the moment? the second question what else? has become of major importance for myself and for my work.

**Dr. Thomas Mengel
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I watched from the window of my office building at Four Times Square as the surreal scene unfolded before my eyes. I remember the crisp September morning that it was, as I walked from the subway to my building at exactly the same moment the first plane hit. When I arrived inside, curiosity amongst my colleagues and I turned to fear, which turned to dread and then panic. I remember frantically dialing my mom's number over and over again as our phone system failed to tell her that I loved everyone so much...I remember the feeling of knowing that at any moment Times Square may be next—and I may die.

Up until that fateful day, I lived my life waiting to live, if that makes any sense. After I'm admitted as an attorney or after I get my career going or when I get married I'd tell myself then I'll enjoy my life...9-11 changed all that in a New York minute.

A few months before, I had joined CoachVille as a Founding Member to learn more about this fascinating coaching profession to which I was so drawn, but I had not yet discovered my niche, my passion. That changed on 9-11. I resolved to never spend another moment of my life waiting to live—and I knew I was not the only single person out there who was doing just that. My mission was revealed to me. I would develop a coaching practice and website dedicated to empowering singles to live the time of their lives every day and embracing their single status as the best time of their lives. The visions for my website came in a series of dreams after that and I went right to work to make them a reality regardless of the time or cost. Thus, SinglesEvolution.com: Living The Time of Your Life! was born and I have never loved my life more than I do right now.

**Louise J. Lombardo, Esq.
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How am I different?

Yesterday a client called to tell me she had breast cancer. I didn't cry. I didn't anguish over "Why her?" I simply started to breathe. For now I know that our job here is to truly be present for people and not to hide in our own fears. Our job is to listen and to share our comfort and wisdom. Our job is to breathe in new life, energy, and healing into everything we touch. And so I started to breathe...just for her.

**Maiya Rose Benda
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I'd been aware of coaching for several years, and had even done what I would call coaching, leading people through the process of starting businesses, helping people through divorce and other life transitions. I had my own successful business and some level of comfort, but nothing that got me up in the morning, beaming and anxious to get to work.

On September 11th I was getting ready to go into my business when I heard the news. I live about 5 minutes outside of NYC, so it felt like a strike against my own backyard. I was profoundly affected that day and in the weeks and months that followed. My son at that point was 6 weeks, and I looked at him and felt profound sadness that his world had been forever changed.

Still, after September 11th, I came to a profound decision in my life. While my business was paying the bills, it wasn't feeding my soul. I decided to become a full-time coach, enrolled at Coach U, starting taking on new clients and to get really serious about the craft and profession of coaching. While 9-11 was a tragedy I wish with all my heart would not have happened, it made very thing crystal clear for me. Why waste time away doing anything less than the absolute maximum?

Life is today, and nothing more. I've decided to revel in each day, and for me that means coaching.

**Maria E. Andreu
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After 9-11, I started thinking about how none of us knows what is around the corner.

I asked myself what I would regret not having done if I knew I had a few days to live. What came up was swimming with dolphins. This had been a dream of mine for a few years, and each year I said, "I'll do it next year.

I realized I needed to get on with it, but it actually felt a bit scary. What if my number one dream turned out to be not that great in reality. Still, I looked into places to go, and in March I spent two weeks in a rain forest cabana beside the water in a remote part of Costa Rica. My husband doesn't have the same passion for dolphins, so I went alone.

This was the highlight of my year so far. I got to swim in the wild with up to 500 dolphins at a time. It was every bit as magical as I had hoped, and the two weeks gave me a good balance of time with dolphins, time alone and time with others. I met interesting people, had a reminder of the adventures I used to go on alone, and came back renewed, refreshed, and with some great ideas for my business. I'm now determined to take time each year to adventure alone.

**Vicky White
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I used to be someone who didn't want to get involved in politics or understanding our government's policies and issues. My husband had a smattering of knowledge about world politics but I never wanted to listen to what he said—I found it distasteful or boring. The events of 9-11 so affected us that we both became insatiably curious as to how such a thing could occur. Suddenly the small details of my life seemed incredibly banal. We started doing research on the foreign policy of the United States, which led us to how the world's economic policies are run, which taught us a lot about the world banking system, and what makes everything tick. Most importantly, we learned how the dwindling supply of natural resources and our increasing population growth are adversely affecting our future. This helped us to understand the dynamics of the events of 9-11 and why our government feels it is imperative to have a strong presence in the Middle East. Most of what we learned is completely unknown to the average American, although the information is readily available to those who want to do the search, and many would find the answers astounding!

As a result, I have decided to start researching alternative energy resources. I am aiming to include this knowledge into my coaching practice, so that I can help people make the changeover from a petroleum-based lifestyle to a more sustainable form of living. Through the events of 9-11, I feel that I have found a larger and more important game to play.

**Nijole Sparkis
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For me the event took a different turn than it did most people. I, of course, initially felt a great sense of loss, sadness, and fear. My next door neighbor was from Saudi Arabia, and he studied Islam. He invited me to attend the mosque with him, and I accepted. From a coaching perspective, it was interesting to study another culture, especially in a time of such turmoil. It has provided me with a much broader view of the world. The lesson I have learned, and the insight that I have gained, is something that I hope to pass onto my clients.

**Bryan Hayes
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