

Episode 0006

Igniting Intentional Change

Show Transcript



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Presented by Dr. Gala Gorman
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00:07

Dr. Gala Gorman: As the scales tip, we move into contemplation and begin to look at options and alternatives.

00:19

Announcer: You've tuned to Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. Here, you'll find Sage Advice for taking inspired action. Awareness is the key. With this key, it's easier to navigate in the human world with all of its detours. It requires that we get to know ourselves intimately. If you choose to join us, this just might make you an Awareness Addict . . . alive, alert, awake, and aware of life's possibilities.

00:49

Dr. Gala Gorman: This is Episode 6. In this episode, we are going to ignite change . . . intentionally. It's going to require that we accept a bit of discomfort in the short term. We can make the process easier. Just stay with me. I'm Dr. Gala Gorman and I'm an Awareness Addict. I'd rather make some changes proactively based on divine guidance. I hope you'll want to do the same.

01:16

As I was doing some research for this episode, I came across an old Chinese proverb that says, "In times of great winds, some build bunkers, others build windmills." We are living in these times of great winds. Winds of change are blowing through us, challenging each and every organization.

This particular article that I found was from a site called Greenbiz.com. It talks about living in a time with great winds of change. The author refers to what he says is a now-trendy managerial acronym, VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous). He says this goes a long way in describing the business context we find ourselves in. In light of the political turmoil and all of the changes that we are facing, it is interesting to bring this back to business. Such times of uncertainty and volatility, he goes on to say,

“Naturally invoke fear in us, yet it is a fearful clinging to the tried-and-tested status quo that will undermine our ability to adapt and evolve in these challenging times.”

02:43

I think this is really a profound insight, whether you're dealing with a business yourself or it's just the business of your life. One of my personal quotes is, "It's the business of your life and you're the CEO." This definitely applies to you.

As we go a little further into this, I found a study conducted by Global LAMP Index. It compares the financial performance of organizations that embrace this sort of "living systems principle" approach. What they actually found was that these businesses are regenerative. Joseph Bragdon from the Global LAMP Index says, as an investment manager himself, he discovered that the more companies model themselves on living systems and the deeper they go into aligning themselves with life, the more creative and profitable they become.

03:47

As you can see, this applies not only to personal situations but also business situations. I have a business background, so I always try to combine the two. It's important to me that we bring these principles into all areas of our lives.

04:12

Let's take a moment to develop awareness. This is something you can practice anywhere . . . anytime. Begin by noticing where your breath is landing in your body? Are you feeling your breath in your chest? Is it expanding your rib cage? Or, even your belly?

Just become aware of your breathing.

Now, we're going to breathe intentionally. We'll start by breathing deeply into our belly. Breathe deeply . . . expanding your belly. Notice how it feels for your belly to expand. Then, pull your abdomen in so that all of the stale air gets pushed out on the exhale.

Let's do that again. Breathe in deeply . . . all the way into your belly. Expand your belly. And again, breathe out and flatten your tummy. Squeeze all that air out.

Next, we'll move the breath up to our rib cage. Intentionally expand your ribcage with the breath. It may feel like your ribs are stretching out on both sides . . . or you may feel it expanding your back. Just notice how that feels. You're stretching your lungs to the side and creating flexibility in your ribs. Take another breath into your ribcage.

Now, let's go back to how you were probably breathing when we started this practice. Breathe into your upper chest. You can feel your breastbone raise and lower with the breath. Notice how it feels to take a shallow breath now that we have expanded the breath into our belly and rib cage.

We have sent a clear message to our brain and nervous system that we can take control. Let's use this feeling of empowerment to practice Aware Appreciation.

What is ONE BIG THING that you appreciate right now? And, keep this in mind as you notice more things to appreciate as you move through your day.

06:30

Change is inevitable. But we do have control over it much of the time . . . if we are willing to ignite change intentionally. As a reminder, I warned you. It is highly likely that we will experience unhappiness in the short term. From the happiness book I mentioned last episode, it's clear that even ill-conceived habits create happy chemicals in the brain.

6:58

Let's start by looking at why we would even consider changing. If we are creating happy chemicals right now and

there is obviously some satisfaction coming from whatever habit it is that we're engaging in, why change?

Well if you look at any habit in your life, you would say, "I believe I would be happier if I change this particular habit." For example, I love cupcakes. I'll use chocolate cupcakes as an example. A really fantastic chocolate cupcake is almost irresistible to me.

7:41

Let's just say, I have developed a habit of eating cupcakes a little too regularly. I feel like they are contributing to a waistline that I'm not super happy about. Even though that chocolate cupcake is firing happy chemicals in my brain in the short term when I eat it, very quickly, it's turning to regret and disappointment. I know that overall, in the big picture, I would be happier if I avoided the chocolate cupcake . . . maybe not all the time, but most of the time.

It is helpful to look at this brain chemistry information whenever we're trying to get our heads around change because once we understand that even a habit that seems really destructive is actually making us think we're happy and satisfied. It helps us realize what we're up against. We've got to actually make the new thing that we're doing more satisfying which sometimes is easier said than done.

8:52

This is why we talk about being willing to be unhappy in the short term. We are going to be less happy in the short term because we've now given up our old 'whatever it was' that was making us happy, at least in some ways. And, we are coming in to this new habit that we haven't quite figured out how to really call it "great" yet. As we are looking at how we're actually making these changes, we just look at happiness versus more happiness. It can be helpful to think of the scales tipping.

9:35

We have an image that I'll share with you that shows pain on one end and pleasure on the other. The pain associated with that pleasurable experience becomes greater than the

pleasure. Once that happens, granted that it may take a while for it to finally get to the point where there's really no other option but to change . . . you start feeling it. You start questioning.

10:12 There is a model of change by Prochaska that talks about the stages that we go through in change. Precontemplation . . . we're not even thinking about it. "I'm just happy eating my cupcakes and trying not to notice that my pants are getting tighter and tighter." As we move to the contemplation stage of change, which is what I'm talking about here, now, we've recognized, "Okay. I'm starting to see a little bit of a problem but is the problem bad enough to warrant really experiencing the unhappiness and the lack of pleasure by eliminating it?"

10:55 As the scales tip, we move into contemplation and begin to look at options and alternatives. Now we can make this process a heck of a lot easier once we understand how change happens. And we can observe. That's why we're Awareness Addicts. We are becoming aware of how these things happens in our lives.

As we become aware of the process and start to see how we are in precontemplation or maybe have moved in to contemplation, we can proactively decide that we want to move things along rather than waiting until we've gained 20 pounds eating chocolate cupcakes. We can gain a few pounds or five pounds and say, "I don't like the direction this is headed in. The pain might be not so great that I have no other choice but I'm going ahead and initiating this change myself anyway." That is what we're talking about here as we start to look at how we can make change intentionally. I call it Igniting Intentional Change because I want to have as much control as possible over how my life experience turns out.

12:21 I've been called a bit of a control freak. Some of you may be with me on that one. I don't necessarily think that has to be

a term that we want to part ways with. It definitely can serve us and here is one of the great ways that it serves us.

As we make change intentionally, we embrace the fact that change happens. Life is going to happen. Even if it's not my cupcake example, where that is really 100% voluntary, we are going to be presented with situations that are going to beg us to change. It might not be something that we would have brought on ourselves. These principles, though, apply regardless of what type of change we're trying to make. Sometimes, the change ends up being pretty abrupt if it's thrust on us unexpectedly.

13:25

Again, we are going to apply awareness. We are going to observe what is actually going on. Evaluate where we are in the stages of change. The stages are precontemplation, contemplation, preparation or planning, action, and maintenance. The next step beyond contemplation is preparation and planning. This is really a critical step, but a step for another episode. The important thing to practice here is awareness and to start seeing how you get stuck and what holds you back.

14:11

What's your takeaway for today? One little "aha" and your time will be well spent.

As I was contemplating my takeaway, I was reminded of a term that I used not infrequently and it's called "divine discontent." Sometimes, we want to change just for the sake of changing . . . just because we are bored and things have been the same in our own minds for too long. Of course, this usually doesn't happen when things are going well. Although, I will say that we do have a tendency to sabotage ourselves sometimes.

We can initiate a change that was not even warranted if we don't apply awareness and really check our motivations. But divine discontent is that feeling that we're being called to

something else. And being willing to follow that nudge, that hunch, that intuition, and just see where it leads us. To know that there may be change required in order to follow a new path. But to feel like you've been really divinely guided and trust in that process.

15:43

Question:

I'm wondering why I can't seem to get a new habit to "stick." I'll make some positive change and be really proud of myself for a while. Then, little by little, I find myself slipping back into the old behavior pattern. Why is it so easy to keep going back to our old bad habits even after we've experienced the positive change temporarily?

16:10

Dr. Gala Gorman: First, thanks for submitting your question. It is something we can all relate to. Why is it that we put in the effort to make a change . . . and may have even experienced some real discomfort in the process . . . only to "relapse." This can be explained fairly easily when you understand that the old habit was lighting up the pleasure center in your brain. Even if the new habit becomes comfortable, we may still feel the pull to experience that old familiar feeling of comfort and satisfaction. It can actually be instructive if you practice awareness. If you haven't engaged in the old habit in a while, it may not provide the same pleasure it once did. If so, then your risk of getting pulled back in is diminished. But, if the old habit really lights up the brain, you know you've got to be more diligent in keeping your distance. Only you can answer that question. The important thing is that you don't let a slip turn into a full-blown relapse . . . if you really want the change to stick. Just get back with the program. Tomorrow is a new day!

17:22

Announcer:

Are you ready to create an attitude adjustment? Practicing Aware Appreciation will make a positive difference. You can access the Aware Appreciation Worksheet by visiting AwarenessAddicts.com/AA. In just a few minutes a day, you'll stop negativity in its tracks . . . and gain some insight and awareness in the process.

Your feedback makes a difference. What part of this episode helped you the most? Join the Awareness Addicts Facebook group and share your thoughts. Make sure you leave a review wherever you've accessed the show. And, if you know others who could use some divine inspiration, share with them! Remember, all the links and resources are available at AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Don't waste another moment feeling confused and stuck. As an Awareness Addict, you're alive, alert, awake and aware of life's possibilities.

18:20

Dr. Gala Gorman: We know change happens. And, I hope you're with me as we work to ignite change intentionally. So, there's more to explore as we become more intentional. We'll get started in the next episode. You don't want to miss it.

18:39

Announcer:

This was Awareness Addicts with Dr. Gala Gorman. For more information and to find any resources mentioned in this episode, visit AwarenessAddicts.com/Episodes. Thank you for tuning in.

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