

Designing Your Life (IAP-Spring 2009)
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Lecture/Discussion 6: Haunting Incidents

Principle: Hauntings

Hauntings are memories that stay with us for many many years. They hold the key to the patterns of us; they are lessons that are ready to be learned. They have common characteristics:

1. ***It is one-sided story that really is two-sided.*** But have you really been checking in with the other people involved? You are talking with the other person in your head, not with your mouth. If you are talking to someone in your head, then you have a haunting. You are making up lies about the way the other person would respond, because you don't know.
2. ***There is a victim/martyr side of the story.*** Why did you put up with it?

To find a haunting, look for things that you cannot shake. A dream, an ambition that you haven't made good on, something that someone said to you, or something that you said (or didn't say). Stuff you are taking to the grave. Embarrassing moments, something uncomfortable, something that makes you angry.

Oftentimes we have our story about why this memory bothers us. "It's because my mom was such an unfair witch!" But we don't have the real reason why it bothers us. It bothers us because there is something about ourselves that we need to learn from in this incident.

To begin unraveling, ask yourself if there was:

1. Jealousy/envy
2. You trying to get out of trouble.
3. You trying to look good to others. You lose yourself.

For example, Lauren was often screwed over by her girlfriends. At first she was like "how could this happen to me? Poor me." But then she asked herself why she chose those friends. How was it that she was so talented to pick so many of the same type? Her lesson was that she needed to learn how to have integrity in relationships. To not ignore her friends being mean to other people and turning a blind eye, but to stand up for what is right. To not seek out the adoration of others to the exclusion of seeing them for who they really are. Why does she need the adoration? Why is that the most important quality to her? Why play make-believe about who these people are?

Our work is to connect the dots on these incidents and see what it says about you. See what these say about you.

As we discussed in lecture 2, you can choose what you want to prove in your life, and prove it. But the problem comes when you insist on believing that people are a certain way. If you believe that people treat you unfairly, you will meet nothing but unfair people. Until you recognize that it is your theory, you will continue to prove it. The hauntings show you what theories you are proving.

Oftentimes the thing that bothers us about other people is some trait that we have as well. See what you are attracting. Do you want to attract something different?

Class Participation

Participant 1: I am haunted that when I was 13, I predicted that this one girl would be the first of our friends to get pregnant. Someone told her, and she got mad. But lo and behold, she was the first.

Lauren: So then you need to clear this up with the friend who told, and the girl who got pregnant.

Participant 1: But I can't tell her that. Her life is so complicated, she's married now, I don't want to rock the boat (and a bunch of other excuses).

Lauren: See the fear. Underlying this story is a pattern about you. This haunting is part of a larger picture about you. Go back and have the conversations with people, and things will start to shift. What we are pushing up against is a pattern of you. You will start to see what this pattern is. This is not a big deal. It's a cute little kid story. What are you so afraid of? There is something that you have hidden that becomes reality. It has become a theory. The point of going after the hauntings is to find your bad theories. Your life lesson is to solve the bad theories and become the hero in your life.

Lauren: We could psychoanalyze you and find out why you feel the way you do. But action (in the form of a confession) is really a testable hypothesis. Confess, and see if things shift. This is easy. Just do it. So this is a really great approach toward shifting your life: you don't necessarily have to understand all the pieces, or go that deep, in order to effect real change.

Homework

1. Continue making and keeping promises, reporting in every Sunday. Report on whether you kept or did not keep your promises. Suggested format:
 - a. Describe the promise
 - b. Write for each promise "KEPT" or "NOT KEPT"
 - c. Describe the consequence
 - d. Write if you paid the consequence or not. IF no, by when will you pay it?
 - e. What are your stats on keeping the promise (e.g. I kept 5/7 days).
 - f. What did you notice about yourself? Where did you stop yourself? Where were you a chicken or brat, and where were you great? You can include this for any promise, but ALWAYS do this for every promise that was NOT KEPT.
2. Write out the incidents from your life that haunt you. Include everything you have ever done that you don't want people to know about. Look for main, *sharp* incidents and events that have shaped you. They are very specific memories; for example, when I think of X, what immediately comes to mind is Y. Be sure to cover all the important topics of your life (mother, father, family members, relationships, sex, job incidents, money, career, break-ups, childhood dramas and fears). You can revisit the 18 areas to jog your memory. Dig deep— there should be at least 15 incidents on your list. Each haunting should have at least a 3-sentence description, and it should be clear to the reader what the incident was.
3. Week 1—Identify another trait you want to take down, such as "Judgmental"
 - a. Which parent does it come from?
 - b. Describe their version of it.

- c. Identify 2 different styles of the trait in you, ways that it manifests/shows up.
For example,
 - i. I am judgmental when I watch and say nothing
 - ii. I am judgmental when I do say something

- 4. Week 2—Catch the trait and have some insights about it (getting the character/personality understood) [NOTE – RULE—DO NOT FEEL BAD ABOUT IT—get a sense of humor about it, have fun, laugh at it, love it.]